

2024 Annual Progress and Services Report



2020 - 2024 Child and Family Service Plan

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COLORADO
Office of Children,
Youth & Families
Department of Human Services

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Glossary of Acronyms

AAPI	Adult Adolescent Parenting Index
ABCD	Assuring Better Child Health and Development
ACF	The Administration for Children and Families
ACHY	Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth
ADP	Average Daily Population
AFCARS	The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
AI/AN	American Indian/Alaskan Native
APHSA	American Public Human Services Association
AAICPC	Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
APSR	Annual Progress and Services Report
ARCH	Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH)
ARD	Administrative Review Division
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
ASO	Administrative Service Organizations
ASTC	Approved Short Term Care
BHA	Behavioral Health Administration
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, People of Color
BPCTs	Best Practice Court Teams
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CANS	Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths
CAP	Child Abuse Prevention
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
CASAs	Court Appointed Special Advocates
CBA	Credit Builders Alliance
CBCAP	Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
CCR	Colorado Community Response
CCWIS	Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System
CCWSC	Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CDEC	Colorado Department of Early Childhood
CDHE	Colorado Department of Higher Education
CDHS	Colorado Department of Human Services
CDPHE	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
CEEX	Celebration of Educational Excellence
CFPS	Child Fatality Prevention System
CFRT	Child Fatality Review Team
CFSA	Colorado Family Support Assessment
CFSP	Child and Family Services Plan
CFSR	Child and Family Services Review
CHSC	Center for Health and Safety Culture

CHSDA	Colorado Human Services Directors Association
CIP	Court Improvement Program
CISU	The Colorado Implementation Science Unit
CMP	Collaborative Management Program
CN	Community Norms
COCAP	Colorado Child Abuse Prevention
COPE	Circle of Parents
COSHI	Colorado Sexual Health Initiative
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
COYLN	Colorado Youth Leadership Network
CPA	Child Placement Agency
CPTF	Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
CWELC	Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council
CWPTG	Child Welfare Prevention Task Group
CWTS	Child Welfare Training System
CYMHTA	Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act
DANSR	Dependency and Neglect System Reform
DCW	Division of Child Welfare
DOLA	Department of Local Affairs
DR	Differential Response
DYS	Division of Youth Services
ECC	Early Childhood Councils
ECHO	Enhanced Community Health Outcomes
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
ETP	Emancipation Transition Plans
ETV	Educational Training Vouchers
FAC	Family Advisory Council
FFPSA	Family First Prevention Services Act
FSP	Family Support Plan
FSPP	Family Support through Primary Prevention
FYI	Foster Youth to Independence
FYiT	Foster Youth in Transition
GALs	Guardians ad Litem
GIS	Geographic Information System
HIPPY	Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
HOP	Homeless Outreach Program
HT	Human Trafficking
IART	Institutional Assessment Review Team
ICAMA	Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance
ICPC	Interstate Compact for Placement of Children
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act

IDI	Intercultural Development Inventory
IMD	Institutions for Mental Disease
LFS-RM	Lutheran Families Services-Rocky Mountain
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning +
MAPP	Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting
MCV	Monthly Caseworker Visits
MIECHV	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting
MST	Multi-Systemic Therapy
MSW	Master of Social Work
NDAP	Nurturing Dads and Partners
NEICE	National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise
NFP	Nurse-Family Partnership
NPP	Nurturing Parenting Program
NSTRC	National SafeCare® Training and Research Center
NTDC	National Training and Development Curriculum
NYTD	National Youth in Transition Database
OCR	Office of the Child's Representative
OCYF	Office of Children, Youth, and Families
OIT	Office of Information Technology
OOH	Out-of-Home
ORPC	Office of the Respondent Parent Counsel
OSRI	Onsite Review Instrument
PAT	Parents as Teachers
PDG	Preschool Development Grant
PFS	Protective Factors Survey
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PIP	Program Improvement Plan
PPSS	Post-Permanency Supports and Services
PRIDE	Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education
PRTF	Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities
PSSF	Promoting Safe and Stable Families
QRTP	Qualified Residential Treatment Program
RCHY	Rural Collaborative on Homeless Youth
Re-ED	Re-Education
RFP	Request for Proposal
RGAP	Relative Guardianship Assistance Program
ROM	Results Oriented Management
RPG	Regional Partnership Grant
RTS	Roadmap to Success
SA	Sexual Abuse
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System
SANCA	Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts in America

SBAR	Situation Background Assessment Recommendation
SCC	SafeCare® Colorado
SFPF	Strengthening Families Protective Factors
SILP	Supervised Independent Living Placement
SLE	Supervisor's Learning Exchange
Sub-PAC	Sub-Policy Advisory Committee
SUIT	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TBRI®	Trust-Based Relational Intervention
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights
UMUT	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
WIG	Wildly Important Goal
YAB	Youth Advisory Board
YARH	Youth at Risk of Homelessness

Introduction

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is pleased to submit the fourth Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). This report documents CDHS's progress towards accomplishing the goals, objectives, and interventions in the 2020-2024 CFSP, in addition to the requirements set forth in the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) most recent program instruction ACYF-CB-PI-23-01 related to the 2024 APSR.

In recognizing that achieving the goals and objectives established in the CFSP is a collaborative effort, CDHS works closely with a variety of stakeholders in alignment with the CFSP vision statement "Stakeholders collaborate to achieve bold systems change, ensuring safety, permanency and well-being for Colorado's children, youth and families".

Colorado has a state-supervised, county-administered human/social services system, and county departments are the main provider of direct services to Colorado's families. CDHS' responsibility includes rule promulgation, guidance, program oversight and monitoring of county performance and practice, which is done by working closely with counties in collaborative workgroups. CDHS also collaborates with other Colorado state agencies, service providers, and community stakeholders to coordinate services and programs that serve Colorado's children, youth, and families. It is important to emphasize that these partnerships are not only important in the provision of services to children, youth, and families, but also to prevent children, youth, and families from being involved in the child welfare system altogether.

This year's APSR will feature a selection of major initiatives that exemplify collaborative efforts across a wide selection of partners and stakeholders. While this is not a comprehensive list of all collaborators CDHS partners with to achieve the goals and objectives in the CFSP, this year's APSR seeks to highlight the following collaborators:

- The Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC)
- Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)
- Judicial Partners
- Collaboration with Colorado's Native American Tribes
- Collaboration with County Staff/Frontline Workers
- Children, Youth, Families, and People with Lived Experiences.

Collaboration

Prevention

Colorado continues to transform its child welfare system by focusing on proactively strengthening families through prevention and early intervention strategies, keeping families together safely, and only when necessary, placing children out of the home, with prioritization given to family-like settings. This intentional shift has helped reduce further child welfare system involvement and produced positive change for the state's most vulnerable children, youth, and families.

This transformation continues to be possible with the collaborative efforts of many partners and stakeholders. To coordinate and streamline programs, services, and to develop processes for blending and braiding funding sources, the Child Welfare Prevention Task Group (CWPTG) was convened in Summer 2021. Seated members represent all regions of the state's county departments of human services, community organizations, and service providers (including but not limited to the Tennyson Center for Children, Illuminate Colorado, the Family Resource Center Association, the OMNI Institute, and the Kempe Center), people with lived experience/family voice representation, state agency partners, and research and evaluation experts. The CWPTG was appointed through a Child Welfare Sub-Policy Advisory Committee (Sub-PAC) action and operates as an advisory committee for contributing to the designing of a broad statewide prevention infrastructure and is responsible for recommending updates to Colorado's Family First Five-Year Prevention Plan. The actions will be achieved through the development of processes to equitably identify appropriate services and supports to be included in future amendments, policy creation and revisions, subcommittee oversight, and monitoring progress towards identified goals. Members are not only developing the strategic infrastructure needed to implement Family First, but they are also ensuring sustainability and collaboration across a network of state agencies and community partners. This cross-agency collaboration creates intentional working relationships, increased communication, strategic alignment, shared resources, and fosters mutual benefit towards a common goal. Underlying conditions that are foundational to the CWPTG include ensuring equity, valuing those with lived expertise, and is community-grounded, strengths-based, and inclusive throughout Colorado. This ensures that all children, youth, and families have timely access to services and supports that meet their needs and promote safety and well-being.

Within the CWPTG, tasks are delegated to three subcommittees:

- The State Prevention Integration subcommittee is an integral part of revising Child Welfare in Colorado. This subcommittee acts as an advisory group, responsible for providing recommendations to streamline and align prevention processes, services, and funding streams in support of Family First and larger child welfare prevention efforts. The Subcommittee operates with the following objectives:
 - **Short term:** develop and implement a community needs and data driven services screening process to equitably assess elevated services to expand the evidenced-based service array in Colorado's Five-Year Prevention Plan.
 - **Medium term:** develop and implement a process to build evidence towards "well supported" services and support evidence-based evaluations that do not perpetuate exploitative research practices in marginalized communities.
 - **Long term:** develop process maps for all prevention processes and funding streams to identify any overlap, where they conflict, and where there are gaps and make recommendations for streamlining.

- **Ongoing:** serve as a centralized review board for new prevention services, prevention service submittals to the Title IV-E Prevention Clearinghouse, and continually inform child welfare prevention communication deliverables.

Members include Family Resource Centers, county departments of human services, the BHA, the CDEC, Casey Family Programs, the Colorado Home Visiting Coalition, the Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab, Fatherhood Support, the Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies, Fostering Colorado, the Cornerstone Program, the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, Shiloh House, and Illuminate Colorado. Participation in the subcommittee is open to the public.

- The County/Region Prevention Implementation subcommittee: This subcommittee provides meaningful implementation guidance, informed by families with lived experiences and service providers operating within unique communities across Colorado. This subcommittee recognizes that implementation guidance must be developed through the lens of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. The Subcommittee operates with the following objectives:
 - **Short term:** identify and operationalize existing best practice prevention framework.
 - **Medium term:** Family First target population expansion and implementation
 - **Long term:** increase the number of families being served through diverse and equitable prevention programs, decreasing the number of out of home placements and/or length of open cases in child welfare.
 - **Ongoing:** provide recommendations as an advisory group to support best practice prevention implementation and community building across Colorado; Support implementation of existing frameworks and plans around maltreatment prevention, build relationships, and partner across efforts; and building services and supports within the child welfare prevention framework that are flexible and tailored to meet unique family needs.

Members include: BHA, CDEC, county departments of human services, people with lived experience, the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families, Guardians ad Litem (GALs), family voice representation, Parent Possible, the Cornerstone Program, the Tennyson Center for Children, the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel, the Kempe Center, Illuminate Colorado, SafeCare® Colorado, Fostering Healthy Futures, the Collaborative Management Program, the Grand Family Coalition, and the Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA).

- The Data and Evaluation subcommittee: This subcommittee acts as an advisory group, providing data-informed guidance that supports state, regional, and county partners in thinking through opportunities and solutions within Family First and larger child welfare prevention efforts. The Subcommittee operates with the following objectives:
 - **Short term:** identify pressing needs in Colorado communities, services available to meet those needs, and what service gaps exist.
 - **Medium term:** inform the continuous quality improvement (CQI) process for evidence-based services named within Colorado's Family First Prevention Plan; inform evidence-building requirements and opportunities of Colorado's Family First Prevention Plan.
 - **Long term:** expand data-informed prevention guidance beyond Family First.
 - **Ongoing:** provide recommendations to improve data quality and utility while streamline existing data sources during decision-making and planning.

A commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) underscores all objectives, where data-informed guidance will include explorations of disproportionality, disparity, and equity impact during analysis, meaning-making, and data application.

Achieving these objectives will be done in partnership with state and local agencies, community-facing organizations, providers, policy decision-makers, families and community members, the full Child Welfare Prevention Task Group, the State Prevention Integration subcommittee, the Local/Regional Prevention Services subcommittee, and the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab.

The Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act (CYMHTA) (C.R.S 27-67-101, et. seq.), under the purview of the BHA, allows for families to access mental health treatment services for their child or youth, as an alternative to child welfare involvement when a dependency and neglect action is not warranted. Additional prevention efforts are also highlighted through this APSR, with particular focus on efforts undertaken by the CDEC, such as the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families, the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program, and extensive early intervention and prevention services targeted at children under the age of five.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has a Prevention Services Division which houses the Child Fatality Prevention System (CFPS), Colorado's public health child death review and prevention process. Established by the Child Fatality Prevention Act in 2013, this system focuses on reviewing deaths of infants, children, and youth under age 18 in Colorado that result largely from injury, violence, or undetermined causes. System partners across the state review these deaths and develop actionable child fatality prevention recommendations centered on preventing injuries, increasing child and family health and wellness, enhancing the protective factors, and reducing adverse childhood experiences. See "Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths" in the Update on Service Descriptions section of this APSR for more information on the CFPS. The Prevention Services Division also houses other aligned programs that support primary prevention and awareness initiatives (i.e. healthy eating and active living, motor vehicle safety, oral health, substance misuse and overdose prevention) as well as prevention services for populations that are at higher risk including Essentials for Childhood (child maltreatment prevention), Communities that Care (youth violence and substance misuse prevention), as well as Maternal and Child Health and Services for children and youth with special health care needs. The work of the division is supported by robust population health data collection and analysis to direct programming and investments.

Project Foster Power (housed within the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center) is a group of current and former foster youth ages 15 to 25 and over that will leverage youth voices and experiences to improve the Colorado child welfare system through youth-led organizing and advocacy. The Child Welfare Prevention Task Group continues to collaborate with Project Foster Power to ensure that the families and youth with lived experiences can help identify the challenges and solutions for a more effective prevention-focused child welfare agency.

CDHS is also collaborating with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), BHA, and counties, to align funding and services to free up flexible dollars to pay for prevention services. County input ensures that any changes continue to support rural and frontier counties and addresses the lack of Medicaid providers in smaller communities. For more information, please see:

<https://co4kids.org/strengthening-families/family-first/faq/family-first-funding-faqs>

CISU

The Colorado Implementation Science Unit (CISU) was established in October 2022 and reflects a new, innovative approach to expanding and supporting prevention programs across Colorado. Funded in part by the Morgridge Family Foundation as a three-year pilot, CISU is providing dedicated expertise in evidence-building and implementation science methodologies to help Colorado's communities develop and implement effective prevention programs. In addition to advancing program models and implementation methods, CISU is demonstrating how government agencies can apply evidence-based policymaking best practices, improve performance and accountability, and support communities through empathetic strategic partnership.

To advance Colorado's prevention continuum, CISU is working to develop and test theories of change for new, adapted, and/or opinion-based programs. CISU understands that just because a program is well-supported, or "proven," doesn't mean that it will work for every community. Proven programs have been shown to be effective for certain populations under specific conditions.

Additionally, CISU is working to support site readiness for scaling and replicating proven programs in complex systems and within diverse communities. This includes ensuring that sites have systems and supports in place to track fidelity and adjust implementation activities when needed.

In tandem, these critical functions effectively establish a "pipeline" for programs, helping programs build initial evidence, prepare for rigorous evaluation, and implement in a way that is efficient and human centered. As a result of the pipeline, Colorado is well-positioned to help stand up or strengthen prevention programs in all of Colorado's communities, including rural and tribal communities.

CISU is working in close partnership with Colorado's CWPTG to identify opportunities to implement, scale, adapt, and test the prevention programs on Colorado Family First Prevention Services Plan, as well as new program models. Additionally, CISU is examining data and gathering input from the CWPTG to develop recommendations for new prevention programs to add to Colorado's prevention plan, programs that Colorado can replicate to meet the needs of communities.

Through their work, CISU is demonstrating how the government can strategically strengthen prevention efforts by working with communities to ensure programs are achieving their intended results and are accessible to all who need them.

Colorado Community Response

Colorado Community Response (CCR) provides prevention services to families who have been referred to the child welfare system but are either screened out, have a closed child welfare assessment that did not result in an open case, or are identified by a CCR-funded organization as potential beneficiaries of the program. CCR is a 12-to-20-week intensive family support model that assists with family-driven goal setting, connects caregivers to resources in their communities, provides families with one-time financial assistance and financial well-being support, and builds social connections. CCR has 21 sites, 16 community-based agencies that collaborate with local departments of human services, and five local child welfare departments. Services are available in 28 counties.

A 2021 analysis of CCR concluded that CCR is a lower cost child maltreatment prevention program overall, compared to the average cost of other child abuse and neglect prevention programs. This study noted that challenge and success with outreach varies across sites causing cost variation across programs and locations. As a result, CCR established a caseload expectation for the number of families served annually and began research into additional referral pathways. The cost study policy brief can be found in Appendix A. CCR has also recently concluded a randomized-controlled study with results anticipated in late 2023.

The CCR program looked at program data to understand the overall cost to serve a family and if the program was cost effective compared to other child maltreatment programs. Key findings showed that CCR is a lower cost child maltreatment prevention model at about \$2,000 per family served. Additionally, a cost-study of CCR was completed providing insight on the cost for implementing and sustaining the program as well as costs per program participant. This study involved an exhaustive review of the program and resources required to provide services. Consistent with best practices, program costs were estimated at market value rather than using actual costs incurred by specific providers. Analysis of the program determined that \$2,000 is the average cost to serve a family utilizing the CCR model. This cost will be used to determine site budgets going forward.

Financial well-being is a hallmark of the program. To that end, the program conducted an evaluation of data in partnership with the Office of Economic Security to determine if caregiver financial insecurity was a predictor of a child welfare referral. The research agenda was based on the family stress model of economic hardship. When economic hardship occurs, like a reduction in earnings, the increased pressure on caregivers increases parenting stress which leads to depression, demoralization, and “disruptions in skillful parenting” that can lead to child maltreatment. The study showed that financial shocks in earned income are strongly correlated with child welfare hotline referrals. This information will be used to identify other referral pathways to the program for families experiencing financial shock based on loss of income. Further details on this study will be reported in future APSRs.

Placement Continuum

Colorado has worked across multiple systems to improve the full continuum of out-of-home care for children and youth. There were several new federal requirements due to Family First, and Colorado took this opportunity to improve the system in its entirety beginning at the highest level of care. These improvements included the creation of a Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP) level of care in Colorado, addressing Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) compliance across all placement providers. Colorado has begun using data obtained through independent assessments to help identify and address other gaps in the placement continuum. Colorado also worked with local providers to increase the availability of Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) to meet the acute needs of those youth, including both medical and psychiatric. At lower levels of care, Colorado expanded its utilization of kinship providers and is actively working to support our foster care providers. Please see “Rules Regulating Therapeutic Foster Care” in the Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes section of this APSR.

The implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act in Colorado took effect on October 1st, 2021. Since that time, there are now 15 QRTPs within the state¹ with availability to

¹ <https://co4kids.org/family-first-dashboard/provider-ffpsa-transitioning>

provide treatment for up to 186 children or youth. At the time of writing this APSR, another provider is currently applying for QRTP licensure, which would add treatment for 5 additional children/youth.

Children and youth receiving QRTP level of treatment are subject to lifetime limits. These limits vary according to the child or youth's age as follows:

- Those age 12 or younger have a QRTP lifetime limit of 6 months (consecutive or nonconsecutive).
- Those age 13 or older have a QRTP lifetime limit of 12 consecutive months or 18 nonconsecutive months.

While most children and youth transition back home or to a more family-like lower level of treatment before reaching their QRTP lifetime limit, some youth continue to need this level of treatment beyond their initial lifetime limit, and there is the option to submit a waiver request application with clinical documentation to receive an extension. Counties submit a waiver request with supporting documentation to demonstrate evidence of both the ongoing need for this level of treatment and the evidence of improvement from the treatment received in this setting.

At the time of writing this APSR, 25 waiver requests have been received for youth in DCW custody to extend their QRTP lifetime limit, with eight actively under consideration. Among those where a review process was completed, the majority have been approved. Several youth were not approved because it was assessed that the child or youth could have their treatment needs met in a more family-like setting in the community.

The Division of Child Welfare (DCW) partnered with the BHA and HCPF, along with community stakeholders, placement providers, youth and families, the Office of the Child's Representative (OCR), the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC), the Court Improvement Program (CIP), and Administrative Service Organizations (ASO) to create the minimum requirements to become a QRTP in Colorado.

The implementation of a standard independent assessment process to determine the required level of mental health treatment for youth entering care gathered a significant amount of data. This data will be shared between the BHA, DCW, HCPF, and other community partners to identify the gaps in the current continuum with CDHS leadership and help to create new levels of care. Treatment foster care was identified along with more substance use disorder treatment facilities for youth very early in implementation. CDHS will use this data to help ensure children and youth are in the lowest level of care required to meet their needs.

Members of the legal and judicial community have also taken an active role in the implementation of Family First in Colorado. CIP has served as members on many implementation committees, including the Assessment Workgroup. The CIP has worked closely with CDHS to ensure that judicial officers and other legal stakeholders are aware of the new requirements as it relates to the QRTPs and prevention services. The CIP also supported the development of a bench card for judicial officers and other stakeholders that provides specifics about the QRTP review process. The CIP has hosted training for judicial officers, GALs, county attorneys, county department directors, juvenile justice stakeholders, court appointed special advocates (CASAs), and other partners. The CIP continues to work with CDHS, local Best Practice Court Teams (BPCTs) and other stakeholders to ensure that the judicial and legal communities receive information related to the implementation of Family First.

Colorado's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Round 3 Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Colorado's CFSR Round 3 PIP began case reviews and data collection in July 2019. The PIP activities' implementation period began in April 2020 and ended in March 2022. The implementation of the five PIP goals involved the collaborative efforts of DCW, county departments of human services, OCR, ORPC, the Administrative Review Division (ARD), and judicial partners as part of the PIP Implementation Team.

Six Colorado counties were selected as the counties to be a representative sample of Colorado practice through the implementation phase of the PIP. The counties represent both metro and rural areas of the state. DCW's county intermediaries and program staff worked closely with PIP partners at the county departments of human services by providing technical assistance, reviewing data, and hosting regular check-ins on activity progress.

Colorado is still in the non-overlapping measurement period, which will end in September 2023. DCW is working diligently with the PIP counties, ARD, and the Children's Bureau to meet the remaining measurement goals before the end of the non-overlapping measurement period. Further information will be reported in the next APSR.

Alignment with Judicial Partners

CDHS supported the planning and execution of the 2023 Convening on Children, Youth and Families event, which was open statewide this year. The 2023 Convening was centered around CIP's Strategic Plan, which includes the impact areas of Safety-Based Decision Making, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Best Practices in Child Welfare, and Best Practice Court Team Infrastructure Redesign. CDHS has also partnered with CIP to provide training throughout the year, and those trainings are documented in more detail in the annual CIP Self-Assessment, which are submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

CDHS continues to collaborate with CIP, CASAs, OCR, and ORPC. These agencies have committed to meeting quarterly to discuss worries, opportunities for improvements, and what is working well.

CIP and CDHS continue to recognize the importance of high-quality legal representation of children/youth and parents involved in child welfare legal proceedings. CIP has designed its 2022-2026 strategic plan to incorporate high quality legal representation into every project by emphasizing its importance in implementing effective systems change.

The OCR pursued a large practice change for their contract attorneys to a direct-representation model instead of a best interest model, for youth over 12 in child welfare legal proceedings. House Bill 22-1038² was signed into law in April 2022 aligning practice with federal legal representation guidance and expectations. The bill took effect on January 9, 2023, and the CIP Taskforce (including CDHS representatives) remained open to opportunities to support this change.

Dependency and Neglect System Reform (DANSR) and Circle of Parents Expansion (COPE)

² <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1038>

The Colorado Judicial Department and CDHS, along with Illuminate Colorado and the Kempe Center, continue to partner on the Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) to bring the Circle of Parents in Recovery intervention to counties that use the DANSR³ approach in managing court cases. The grant continues to aim at increasing family well-being, improving permanency, and enhancing the safety of children who are in, or at risk of, an out-of-home placement due to a parent's or caregiver's opioid or other substance abuse and will do so by evaluating the efficacy of the COPE intervention. Last year, the partners redesigned the evaluation structure to allow access to the intervention to more parents and children through an expanded eligibility definition. This allows all stakeholders to refer families to their local Circle of Parents in Recovery group and places a stronger emphasis on the relationships between the courts/ court team and the local peer support providers. This year, the partners have focused on recruitment of parents to access the intervention. This has included strengthening the partnerships between community members and the courts, marketing the intervention, and ensuring professionals know about the intervention to then encourage parents to attend.

DANSR was highlighted in "Court Improvement Programs: Collaboration Between Child Welfare Agencies and Legal and Judicial Communities" with the Child Welfare Information Gateway. At the time of writing this APSR, the publication was still in draft and has not yet been released to the public. The article focuses on collaboration and relationship building between child welfare and legal and judicial communities, using DANSR as an example of such collaborative efforts.

Court of Appeals Workgroup

The CIP and CDHS continue to strive to improve permanency outcomes for children and youth. In April 2018, the Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court appointed a Colorado Judicial Department Child Welfare Appeals Workgroup. The purpose of the workgroup is to consider necessary changes to practice, rules, and statutes to ensure that appeals in cases concerning relinquishment, adoption, and dependency and neglect are resolved within six months after being filed. The workgroup is composed of legal and child welfare professionals, and met through February 2021 to recommend changes in practices, policies, and procedures to help alleviate details in the appellate process. A final report was released in Spring 2021. In Spring 2022, the Colorado Legislature passed House Bill 22-1113⁴, which was signed by Colorado's Governor in March 2022, and which aims to minimize delays in the appeals process so that children in dependency and neglect cases achieve permanency in a timely manner. HB 22-1113 authorized the workgroup to continue the work started in 2018 and the workgroup filed an interim report on Jan 1, 2023 (see Appendix B).

In 2022, CIP developed a new website⁵ aimed at improving usability and access to resources and information. The website is organized into sections that clearly reflect the priorities of the CIP in its mission to further the CIP Strategic Plan.

Court Observations

In 2022, the CIP convened a workgroup to look at best practices in child welfare across the state. This workgroup determined that the first step should be a hearing quality study to evaluate the practices that are currently implemented throughout Colorado. CIP entered a contract with Data Savvy Consulting⁶ to conduct a hearing quality study in 8 to 10 judicial

³ https://www.courts.state.co.us/Administration/Custom.cfm?Unit=polprogpra&Page_ID=560

⁴ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1113>

⁵ <https://cip.colorado.gov/>

⁶ <https://www.datasavvyconsulting.org/>

districts (out of 22 districts) representing rural and urban counties. The consultant will listen to approximately 400 hearings spread out over these districts and will put together state-wide data and county-level data for Best Practice Court Teams to consider during the May 2023 CQI workshop that is hosted by CIP.

Domestic Abuse Statutory Definition Task Force

CDHS established the Domestic Abuse Statutory Definition Task Force pursuant to C.R.S. § 19-3-304.3. The Task Force convened in April 2022 and will conclude in June 2023. The Task Force looked at local practices relative to addressing domestic abuse in child welfare and numerous presentations were given by Task Force members and outside guests to align knowledge on a number of topics which included: how statutory definitions of child abuse and neglect are utilized within the child welfare system in Colorado, current responses to domestic abuse within counties, disproportionality in child welfare, and the intersection of child welfare and domestic abuse from the perspective of lived experience.

Consensus was not reached regarding recommended statutory change, and this outcome is an honest reflection of the conversations held by members of the Task Force reflecting both the complexity of the issue and the collective commitment to meaningful right-sized support for families. The Task Force membership voiced a strong desire to improve child welfare casework practices, and Members were not all certain that a statutory change would result in that desired outcome.

The recommendation for a 'Flag' such as is used in Child Welfare regarding concerns of Substance Exposed Newborns, was preferred as a direct avenue to structuring and supporting meaningful casework improvements. Members voiced the desire for child welfare to intervene with families when necessary, while mitigating the unintended consequence of over-surveillance of families or the perpetuation of disparities and disproportionality. The recommendations of the Task Force reflect the Members' collective understanding of Child Welfare as one part of a continuum needed to address domestic violence in Colorado communities, with recognition that lasting solutions lie in increasing investments in prevention and early intervention and reducing reliance on Child Welfare for resolving domestic violence concerns in a family. More detail is available in the House Bill 21-1099 Legislative Report⁷.

Family Voices

CDHS has created a Family and Community Engagement Plan⁸, that ensures alignment with the CDHS Strategic Plan, the CDHS Equity Action Plan, Governor Polis Executive Orders, and the Family Voice Council Plan for the Future. The three overall outcomes of the plan are to:

1. CDHS Staff: Increased knowledge, skills, and confidence in engaging community and family members into program planning, implementation, and evaluation methods.
2. Family and Community: Community, families, and youth feel heard, well respected and valued and are given opportunities to be included early on in decisions that impact them.
3. System and Policy: Systems and policies are whole person, whole family and whole community-centered and all program/policy changes are informed by and reflective of community, family, and youth needs.

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https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R71cggmpSs0032ZncBYAJx1N6ra9K7vZ/view?mc_cid=9e622a12a5&mc_eid=db46bc9c93

⁸ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X4SO1hDmYLD5eYaEm4moZz54O9KQP_ck/view

The Family Voice Council⁹

CDHS recognizes the value of family participation and engaging the voices of those with lived systems experience. As reported in prior APSRs, the Family Voice Council is made up of people who have been involved with, or are currently engaged in, two CDHS services or programs. Current Family Voice Council members and alumni continue to inform and guide the department. In the last 18 months, the Family Voice Council contributed to 22 implemented policy and program improvements. Eleven more actions are in progress or being considered. Colorado's model of incorporating the expertise and lived experience of families and communities has received state and national recognition.

The Child Welfare Family Advisory Council¹⁰

DCW created the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council (FAC) in 2022 to strengthen the partnership between the DCW and impacted families and their community so children can heal and thrive. The Child Welfare FAC consists of 16 Coloradans with lived experience in the child welfare system, and are compensated for their expertise through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and a partnership with Illuminate CO. The group meets monthly and connects these members with policy and program staff, local departments of human services, and partner providers. The purpose of the FAC is to include family voices and those with lived experience in providing feedback on DCW planning, policies, and procedures in order to improve the design and delivery of high-quality child welfare services to the youth and families in Colorado.

Co-Visioning Child Welfare Project

DCW is committed to seeking and elevating the voice of Coloradans who are entitled to and/or involved in child welfare services and maltreatment prevention services. The Co-Visioning Child Welfare Project will bring the wisdom of those with lived experience along with allies who have served in the system to steer a multi-year project designed to gather and leverage ideas to answer the following:

- What can we do to invest resources differently?
- How can we leverage the passion of child welfare caseworkers and leaders?
- How can our system be less traumatic and more empowering?
- In what ways can our system be more accountable and used as a benefit or advantage to those who are enrolled or would like to be enrolled?

The Co-Visioning Child Welfare Project brings together members from various experiences and backgrounds to develop a blueprint or plan to answer those questions. These members, through their role as participants on the Co-Visioning Steering Committee, will contribute their ideas and expertise, and will leverage resources to connect with those with past or current experience with Colorado's child welfare system. The members consist of 9 lived experts, and 8 allies. All members (except for the co-chair) are reimbursed for their time and expertise. The project will ensure that recommendations are family-centered and grounded in child safety and wellbeing, and Steering Committee members will bring recommendations to policy makers, service providers, and community leaders.

The Co-Visioning Steering Committee formally convened in a two-day retreat in June 2021 and will continue to meet monthly. Further details will be reported in future APSRs.

⁹ <https://cdhs.colorado.gov/about-cdhs/featured-initiatives/family-voice-council>

¹⁰ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eZY8LYVxTLiPNMRJyrFmSp7y_zhvcTJD/view

Stakeholder Feedback

Over 25,000 stakeholders including state and county staff, interagency partners, service providers, youth advisory boards, current and former youth in foster care, foster parents, Chafee coordinators, Colorado's federally recognized tribes and organizations serving Colorado's American Indian communities were sent the 2024 APSR draft for their review and feedback. A copy of the approved report will be sent to both of Colorado's federally recognized tribes. Two teleconferences were held in April and May, to solicit feedback from internal and external partners. Stakeholders were encouraged to submit their feedback to DCW. This report incorporates the feedback CDHS received from stakeholders and will be publicly available on the CDHS website¹¹ by September 30, 2023, or when final approval is received from the Children's Bureau, along with previous reports.

¹¹ <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/publications-reports>

Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes

Colorado's CFSR Round 3 PIP implementation period began in April 2020 and ended in March 2022. Information about the implementation activities can be found in the PIP progress reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau. The measurement period on case review items will end in September 2023.

Looking ahead towards Round 4 of the CFSR, Colorado monitors qualitative and quantitative data through various means, such as ARD case reviews, CDHS C-STAT discussions, and regular usage of Results Oriented Management (ROM) reports.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. Only 75% of reviewed cases indicated that Item 1 was a strength.

- Data pulled in 2023 for CY 2022 from ROM shows that initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment was timely 85.99% of the time, per Colorado's state standard.
- Data pulled in 2023 for CY 2022 from ROM shows that initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment was timely 69.3% of the time, per the Federal standard.

In discussions with the Children's Bureau during the Fall of 2020, it was determined that for the purposes of Colorado's CFSR Round 3 PIP, the federal standard will be applied for Item 1. Therefore, all future Item 1 reporting methodologies in subsequent APSRs will reflect the federal standard.

Colorado successfully met the CFSR Round 3 PIP measurement plan for Item 1. DCW convened a time-limited CQI workgroup that informed the development of a Timeliness to Initial Response Toolkit. The toolkit was distributed and implemented statewide. To successfully meet Item 1, DCW proactively worked with counties that were identified as having the most substantive impact on statewide performance to develop plans to improve timely responses to assessments of alleged abuse and neglect. Timely response and successfully contacting children within the dispositional timeframe is an essential pillar to child protective services and has been a safety measure Colorado has consistently worked on not only to ensure the safety of children but also to ensure that child protection is determining the appropriate level of involvement with families with expediency.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. 75% of reviewed cases found that Item 2 was a strength, and 62% of reviewed cases indicated that Item 3 was a strength. Data pulled in 2023 for CY 2022 shows that:

- According to ROM, 83.09% of children/youth eligible to re-enter care (within 12 months of discharge from foster care, Jan 2022 - Dec 2022) maintained permanency.
- According to ROM in-home counts, 7214 children/youth entered in-home cases between January 2022 and December 2022. During this same time, 7861 children/youth exited in-

home cases resulting in an exit rate of 0.92. A rate above 1.0 indicates that more people come into in-home counts than exit.

- According to ROM, 96.1% of children/youth involved in in-home cases (January 2022 - December 2022) remained safe (did not have a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect) while the case was open.

Colorado Family Safety and Risk Assessment

Please see “Safety and Risk Assessments” in the Update on the Service Descriptions section of this APSR.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Colorado’s CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. For Item 4, 73% of reviewed cases indicated that this was a strength. Item 5 found that 82% of reviewed cases indicated that this was a strength, and 55% of reviewed cases for Item 6 indicated that this was a strength.

- The placement stability rate (moves per 1,000 days in care during a rolling 12-month period) from January 2022 to December 2022 was an average of 3.29 (all children/youth).
- The percentage of children/youth who entered care in the past 12 months who have achieved permanency is 56.37%.
- The percentage of children/youth who entered care in the past 12-23 months who have achieved permanency is 52.35%.
- The percentage of children/youth who entered care in the past 24 months or more who have achieved permanency is 44.13%.
- The percentage of children/youth adopted within 12 months of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is 52.56%.
- There were 76 youth who emancipated from foster care in 2022.

DCW facilitated a Placement Stability task group from November of 2021 to July of 2022. Members of the task group included DCW, county departments, and community agencies. The task group developed a process map for placement preparation, and narrowed down the focus to two things:

- Placement preparation to determine if placement providers are sufficiently prepared for the placement, and if not, where are the gaps in the process?
- How to intervene if a placement appears to be at risk of disruption.

The group relied on existing resources to enhance their applicability to a broader audience. For example, the group reviewed the Kinship Needs Assessment and updated the assessment so it could be implemented with other caregivers such as foster parents. The group recommended that it partner with counties in a pilot to implement the following:

- Hold a transition/stabilization visit, follow-up contact, and team debrief.
- Use the tools (Caregiver Needs Assessment, People Who May Be Involved in a Case document, and an optional template for monthly visits with caregivers) that the group revised with all caregivers.

The Placement Stability Pilot began in February 2023 and consists of six counties representing small, medium, and large sized counties in the state. The pilot will continue for 9 months, and additional information will be reported in the next APSR.

In efforts to achieve the goals for Items 4, 5, and 6 in the CFSR Round 3 PIP non-overlapping measurement period, DCW has created a Permanency Status Report for the PIP counties to identify points in cases that may result in delayed permanency. DCW's county intermediaries are working closely with the PIP counties to use the report as part of the case review process. DCW's Permanency team also created a template for caseworkers to use when meeting with providers, that helps assess the stability of placements for children in out-of-home (OOH) care.

In March 2022, changes were made to the Children who Re-Enter Care in 12 Months report in ROM, to delineate re-entries from shifts in custody from kinship and parent care, allowing counties to identify when re-entry from kin custody is high.

Colorado has found that historically, adoption assistance had been inconsistent and inequitable for children, youth, and families across the state. An investigation was launched by the Child Protection Ombudsman office in 2016, and a report was created with recommendations about the adoption assistance program. There was a need to reflect adoption practice changes throughout the years, and to provide clarity and consistency in practice. A significant number of modifications were made in rule over the past several years to accurately reflect federal regulations and state statutes regarding the adoption assistance program and adoption practice in Colorado. As part of these rules, through various stakeholder processes, DCW has created the Colorado State Adoption Assistance Policy, and created a new Adoption Assistance Negotiation Worksheet. Counties will be required to use the worksheet with all families in adoption assistance negotiations and renegotiations.

Further details on collaborative efforts between CDHS and judicial partners, such as the court of appeals workgroup and court observation efforts can be found in "Alignment with Judicial Partners" in the *Collaboration* section of this report.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships is preserved for children.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. While 90% of reviewed cases for Item 7 indicated that it was a strength, Items 8, 9, 10 and 11 were not found in substantial conformity. Data pulled in 2023 for CY 2022 from ROM shows that:

- Siblings are placed together 80.05% of the time.
- 48.17% of children/youth are placed with a relative as their initial placement and 47.34% are placed with a relative at any time across the case span.

Fatherhood Program

The Colorado Fatherhood Program focuses on promoting and sustaining healthy marriage, responsible parenting, and economic security. It is currently supporting fatherhood programming in seven sites, serving the following counties: Boulder, Delta, Denver, La Plata, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose, Prowers, and Pueblo. The program plans to outreach to 700 fathers this year. Eligible CDEC fatherhood participants include all fathers (biological, expectant, adoptive, stepfathers, foster, kinship, grandfathers, and father-figures) over the age of 18, with children or caring for children up to age 24. In addition, the program will perform specialized outreach to

those fathers with children receiving Medicaid, single parent fathers, non-custodial fathers, military veteran fathers, fathers without a high school diploma, fathers participating in Head Start, fathers re-entering after incarceration, fathers with a history of involvement with the foster care system, and unemployed fathers.

Participating fathers will receive integrated services that continually connect fathers to services and networks throughout the duration of their engagement through coordinated case management, resource referral and workshops. Fathers will complete a parenting curriculum called Nurturing Dads and Partners (NDAP), receive financial coaching, and set family goals, while building social capital with other fathers and community members using a Strengthening Families Protective Factors approach.

In addition, there is a state-level Fatherhood Steering Committee that supports the sites in aligning services across systems and removing barriers. The Steering Committee has representation from DCW, Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support, domestic violence, mental health, workforce centers, local fatherhood program managers, philanthropy, a certified master trainer for Nurturing Fathers, the Financial Health Institute, the Family Resource Center Association, Illuminate Colorado, the Denver Indian Center, and several fathers. In addition, the Family Resource Center Association facilitates a fatherhood practitioners' network for all providers working with fathers across the state.

Colorado's CFSR Round 3 PIP

Targeted activities set toward improving this outcome were detailed in Goals 3 and 4 in Colorado's PIP. For further information, please see the PIP Progress Reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau. As a continuation of the PIP activities and efforts to roll practice changes statewide, DCW created a Father Engagement page¹² in March 2022, that provides access to research, tools, and other resources for engaging fathers. Many of the materials were created in partnership with the PIP counties and are aimed at improving father engagement at the caseworker and county levels.

Father engagement was also a central topic at the PIP symposium hosted in June 2022. DCW partnered with PIP counties to present on the efforts made and lessons learned throughout the PIP activity implementation period to a statewide audience.

In September 2022, the Father Engagement C-Stat measure was introduced, to improve caseworker contacts with fathers. This measure was rolled out with new resources and statewide trainings to ensure that counties could understand and navigate the contact expectations. A Father Engagement town hall was also hosted to highlight the new C-Stat measure, and to emphasize the importance of early identification of fathers, and steps counties could take to improve identification rates. Promotional materials were sent to all counties in October 2022 to help counties promote father engagement to caseworkers.

DCW also created a father engagement report that is available to counties upon request. The report provides additional statistical information on a county's father engagement, including the percentage of fathers engaged by race/ethnicity, percentage of incarcerated fathers engaged, and the percentage of fathers attending family engagement meetings.

¹² <https://coloradocwts.com/fatherhood-engagement/>

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. Data pulled in 2023 for CY 2022 from ROM shows:

- 91.13% of caseworker monthly visits with the child/youth were made as directed in rule.

DCW updated the CDHS child contact template to include information on what constitutes a quality contact based on lessons learned from the PIP case reviews. Colorado is still in the non-overlapping measurement period of the CFSR Round 3 PIP, DCW is actively working on improving performance in this item. DCW created a hotspot analysis for the PIP counties, using data from ARD out-of-home review data, ROM child contact data, and PIP case review data. The hotspot analysis highlighted areas of strength and areas needing improvement for the PIP counties, to aid counties in their CQI processes.

DCW also made extensive efforts to provide training for counties to help staff understand and develop skills in using ROM to promote the successful completion of remaining PIP items. Training continues to be offered upon county request, and a ROM navigation guide for PIP reports was also created and distributed to counties. DCW also continues to provide monthly communications on Item 14 performance to the PIP counties, to be used in discussions with their county intermediaries.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this item, with 90% of reviewed cases indicating that this was a strength. The Colorado Department of Education has created a list of resources¹³ for education staff on how they can support students in foster care while dealing with COVID-19 concerns. For information on Pay for Success, please see "Service Array" in this section of the APSR.

HB 23-1089¹⁴ was passed in April 2023, and requires CDHS to organize a workgroup in collaboration with other state agencies, to identify and address issues related to foster youth education, transportation, and stability. The workgroup will provide written recommendations to the general assembly before the 2025 regular legislative session. More information will be provided in future APSRs.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental needs.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity for Item 17, with 92% of reviewed cases indicating this as a strength, Colorado was not in substantial conformity with Item 18, with 63% of reviewed cases indicating this as a strength.

In the ROM trainings held for PIP counties in December of 2022 and January of 2023, focus was placed on the Family Support Plan (FSP) Compliance report as well as the FSP Pending report to promote quality discussions around case progress regularly. Information on how to

¹³ https://www.cde.state.co.us/studentssupport/fostercare_covidfaq

¹⁴ <http://leg.colorado.gov/bills/HB23-1089>

navigate these reports was also included in a ROM navigation resource that was developed and distributed to counties.

Statewide Information System

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

Trails Modernization

The objective of the Trails Modernization product is to keep the concept of Trails as an enterprise-wide Human Services application using more modern technologies to meet current and future needs of CDHS. This multi-year project transitions the current Child Welfare system to a web-based application while also bringing the Trails system into compliance as a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS).

The Trails Team is comprised of three separate scrum teams, focusing on separate components of the entire Trails product: Trails Modernization, help desk fixes, and system interfaces. The modernization and interfaces teams track and plan for their work using user stories (enhancements) and bug fix items. Combined the two teams completed a total of 879 distinct items last year. The other team utilizes a separate tracking system and largely assists users with data entry errors within the system. The team continues to stay agile in its deployment processes, releasing bug fixes and enhancements on a regularly monthly basis.

In the Fall of 2022, the Trails team modernized new functionality to comply with new federal requirements around data collection pertaining to children and youth in foster care. These changes were required for all fifty states and completely transformed the data collection process, requiring new data fields, new selection options, and even a new way of submitting the data. Colorado opted to modernize functionality in its CCWIS instead of changing components of its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to meet these needs and redeveloping the functionality later in the modernized system. All data entry around the removal of a child/youth from their home is now done in the modernized system.

The roadmap for CY 2023 includes several major modernizations. The priority is to modernize the fiscal functionality with a timeline of deploying to production by the end of the fiscal year. Following that, the team will focus on modernizing functionality related to the monitoring of the providers who provide services to the children and youth in the child welfare system. The modernization of the Colorado Child Care Licensing System within CDEC resulted in the unexpected prioritization of this monitoring functionality as it left the Trails team with unanticipated and severe tech debt with old, outdated servers containing provider information.

While focusing on the product roadmap, the team will work to implement new technology priorities simultaneously.

- Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery – moving towards a process that will allow the team to deploy code to production more effectively and more quickly without compromising on quality.
- Movement to the cloud – The team plans to slowly transition away from physical servers to cloud servers, generally considered best practice and saving money over time.
- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Compliance – Trails contain multitudes of PII; the team is adhering to best practices, ensuring that when PII needs to be shared, it is shared appropriately and minimally.

The Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act (SANCA)

The Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act (SANCA) allows for electronic data information sharing between the Judicial Courts System and Trails. SANCA/ICON functionality in Trails Legacy had been dormant since December 2016. Due to incompatibility with the Judicial Court System and Trails - ICON interfaces, information was not being exchanged. Through a collaborative effort including county partners, judicial partners, the Office of Information and Technology (OIT), the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), and DCW, the interfaces were updated to electronically exchange data. The SANCA/ICON Interfaces are fully functioning (after some additional fixes in 2023) and supporting child welfare practice. This exchange allows for data from the courts system to be filtered into Trails so that data is organized in one system. The partners involved have been in the process of reviewing the governing structure in place that allows this exchange of information and are updating the Master Data Agreement. While doing this, the partners are exploring if additional data points can and should be shared.

Case Review System

In Colorado's CFSR, Items 20, 21 and 22 were rated as a strength. Item 23 was rated as an area needing improvement, and according to data from ARD reviews, the percentage of adoption cases with terminated parental rights was 54.7% (2016). This is an area of focus in the PIP.

Quality Assurance System

Colorado's CFSR showed that this item was rated as a strength. Please see the Quality Assurance section of this APSR for further details.

Staff Training

The Colorado CFSR found that while Item 27 was a strength, both Items 26 and 28 were areas needing improvement.

Targeted activities for Items 26 and 27 can be found in Goals 4 and 5 of the PIP, and Goal 1 of the CFSP. For updates on how Colorado is addressing Item 28, see Intervention 3.3.3 in the Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes section of this APSR.

Service Array

In Colorado's CFSR, this systemic factor was rated as an area needing improvement. To further address this systemic factor, activities in Goal 5 of the PIP directly address improvement in Items 29 and 30. Please see the PIP Progress Reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

Pay for Success

In September 2018, Colorado launched "Fostering Opportunities", funding services in Jefferson County Public Schools to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care. Managed out of CDHS, the project leverages state and philanthropic dollars to fund five school-based specialists over the next four years to advocate for, support, and mentor students using trauma

informed and evidence-based approaches, as well as ensure better coordination between teachers, families, foster parents, social workers, and other systems involved in the students' lives. As of February 2023, the Fostering Opportunities program has enrolled 137 students in the program. The Colorado Lab partnered with Jefferson County to develop a program manual that helps practitioners implement the program with fidelity. The Colorado Lab also serves as the lead evaluator of the Fostering Opportunities program. Initial results of the randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of the program on attendance, behavior and course completion became available Spring 2021, and demonstrated that the program had a significant impact on suspensions and a modest impact on attendance. Final Outcomes were released at the end of February 2023¹⁵. This information was also released on the Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab blog¹⁶. Compared to the control group, there was a 26% improvement in the rate of students who were currently or formerly in foster care and had access to the Fostering Opportunities program being on track to graduate. This result far exceeded the Pay for Success "highest level of success" goal of achieving a 10% improvement.

Due to the success of the Fostering Opportunities pilot in Jefferson County, state funding to support implementation and ongoing programming specific to Fostering Opportunities has been appropriated by House Bill 22-1374¹⁷ for at least two but no more than five additional school districts. An informational memo¹⁸ was released in January 2023 for all interested school districts to complete the Fostering Opportunities Funding Questionnaire by February 28, 2023. DCW also offered five separate hour-long technical assistance sessions to further answer questions regarding the programming. At this time there were three school districts who have responded, and several additional communities have stated intention to complete the questionnaire.

The Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) project was launched in January 2019 and supports underserved regions of Colorado. MST is an intensive family and community-based intervention program for at-risk youth to reduce criminal justice involvement. MST sites have been extended to underserved regions of Colorado, with therapists in Pueblo, Greeley, Grand Junction, Adams, and Broomfield counties. Two additional MST sites were added in 2020 for a second team in Pueblo, and another covering El Paso, Park, and Teller. Enrollment in the pilot ended in April 2021, with a total of 384 families receiving services under the Pay for Success period. Final outcomes are expected Spring 2023.

Agency Responsiveness to Community

In Colorado's CFSR, this systemic factor was rated as a strength, and continues to be an area that Colorado values as reflected in the many collaborative and cross-system workgroups throughout the child welfare continuum.

Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)

Colorado has created a framework that is designed as a tool to guide strategic thinking, at the state and local level, about resource investments to prevent child maltreatment and promote child well-being. As this tool is used collectively across the state, the resulting alignment of

¹⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/129hC6g95k3TZI8aY6EgylqT14TaufW4Y/view>

¹⁶ <https://coloradolab.org/blog-2022-02-22-fostering-opportunities-now-a-proven-practice/>

¹⁷ https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2022a_1374_signed.pdf

¹⁸ https://mcusercontent.com/cd781c9bc8f90270567729e9e/files/26dd2f09-143c-70d8-6b6a-0e6396430e99/IM_CW_2023_0002.pdf?mc_cid=9ddc453ff2&mc_eid=649d5faad5

strategies maximizes the impact on shared outcomes. Anchored by six foundational principles, the framework outlines potential strategies that when implemented will achieve four overarching outcomes to ensure that all children are valued, healthy and thriving. The Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action toolkit is a valuable resource for communities for planning and implementing their local plans. To date, 28 counties have plans and currently, ten are implementing strategies that stemmed from this planning process through CBCAP support.

Since January 2022, CDEC has been partnering with a consultant, Collective Progress, to enhance the framework and its tools through an equity informed lens. Activities include: interviews with stakeholders including local community groups focused on building equity and family voice into all of the Child Maltreatment Prevention (CMP) plan work; creation of a shared understanding of equity terms and strategies; analysis of existing data to identify disparities in CO; identification of equity-based strategies and tools to use across all counties in their plans; creation of a space for continuous learning on anti-racism with potential clearinghouse of strategies used by communities; and engagement of voices missing from the conversations.

The ten sites that have received CBCAP funding implement strategies in their Child Maltreatment Prevention plans. Many of the sites are family resource centers that provide comprehensive family case management and referral to resources. The CDEC has been intentional about allowing communities to identify strategies across the social ecology and then allowing them to apply for CBCAP funding to implement some of these population-level approaches. Implementing sites received 5 years of CBCAP funding and they are in the final year of their contract which ends June 30, 2023. A new request for proposals will be published to allow the next cohort of organizations to apply for implementation funding.

CMP Efforts by Local Agency Subgrantees		
Local Agency (sites)	Program/ Project	Effort
Catholic Charities-Pueblo	Nurturing Parenting Program (Direct Service)	Provided Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP). NPP staff administered the Adult Adolescent Parenting Index (AAPI) 2.1. This tool is used to measure the effectiveness of the parenting skills taught in class and during home visits in the areas of: Expectations of Children, Developing Empathy, Appropriate punishment, roles and power and independence. Overall, the skill areas of most importance: Expectations of Children, Developing Empathy and Appropriate Discipline, improved, and are demonstrated in parents' interactions with their children.
Chaffee County Human Services	Nurturing Parenting Program (Direct Service)	Provided six classes during this grant cycle, including NPP group classes for parents and caregivers ages 0 to 5; 6 to 12 years old; and adolescents. Also offered was the Nurturing Fathers Program group classes and Individualized

		Nurturing Parenting Program coaching for parents in Chaffee County's child-welfare system.
Community Partnership Family Resource Center	Family Support Services Advocacy (Coordination, direct service)	In partnership with local community partners, Community Partnership Family Resource Center provides voluntary, comprehensive case management services for families. With assistance from a family advocate, families identify their most pressing needs, develop goals, and work towards those goals.
Mesa County Department of Human Services	Family Navigator (Direct Service, Coordination, Systems Change)	Mesa County Human Services implemented a prevention team called the Family Empowerment Team to connect families to local resources and prevention of child welfare involvement. A family navigator was hired to facilitate access to services and supports for families accessing Mesa County Human Services.
Mountain Resource Center	Circle of Parents (Direct Service)	Mountain Resource Center is building the protective factors framework into the community through the Circle of Parents® model of parenting support groups in conjunction with children's programming.
Pinon Family Project	Incredible Years Parenting, Circle of Parents, Parents as Teachers, Incredible Beginnings (Direct Service)	Provision of evidence-based parenting education, home visitation and supportive peer leadership services to families in Montezuma County.
Prairie Family Center	Nurturing Parenting (Direct Services, Collaboration, Outreach)	Provided Nurturing Parenting for families with children with special needs including a support group and respite, promote child abuse prevention month, provide parent leadership and family engagement activities monthly and collect and synthesize data related to child maltreatment prevention.
Prowers County	Prowers Prevention Project - Direct (Direct Service and Collaboration)	Provided Circle of Parents programming to families in Prowers County Launched Family Resource Center
Early Childhood Council of Adams County	Referral Coordination (Coordination, Systems Change)	ECPAC seeks to improve coordination among providers and increase the level of support provided for families, especially those of young children and those most at risk due to poverty,

		teen parenting, or other toxic stress exposure, towards the reduction of child abuse and neglect. ECPAC has worked to align and embed their CMP activities with other early childhood and family initiatives in Adams County towards maximized impact. This includes building on efforts such as Project LAUNCH (primarily early childhood social-emotional/mental health), shared messaging, family leadership, improved policies, shifts towards two generation work, equity, Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visitation, and the Collaborative for Healthy Adams County project - a shared two generation services model.
Starpoint-Fremont County Family Resource Center	(Direct Services Coordination)	The CBCAP Coordinator used the Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) and Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) program to serve the community in providing resources and leadership

Table 1: CMP efforts by local agency subgrantees

Implementing the Protective Factors Framework

In addition to implementing their local child maltreatment prevention plans, CBCAP funded sites also participate in efforts to implement the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. This year the grantees completed training, allowing them to incorporate protective factors at the forefront of their programs and services. Protective Factors materials and knowledge of parenting/child development were provided throughout community class sessions. Pro-social activities were provided to families that utilized the protective factors framework, as were activities in collaboration with mentor programs. The Colorado Family Support Assessment (CFSA 2.0), including the Protective Factors Survey (PFS) derived from the Study of Social Policy: Strengthening Families Protective Factors (SFPF), allowed many grantees to help clients identify areas where programming may be beneficial. In addition, the CFSA 2.0 and PFS allowed families to identify areas where they would most like to see change and need assistance in setting personal family goals. Grantees used this information to guide clients in identifying steps to achieve desired goals ultimately increasing their protective factors. Through additional support, such as family advocates, families were able to self-identify needs, set goals, and finally increase parental resilience.

Training and Professional Development					
				Funding	
Lead Provider	Initiative	Initiative Detail	# Trained	CBCAP Formula	CBCAP ARPA
Illuminate Colorado	Protective Factors	Strengthening Families Protective Factors	51	•	•

		Training: supported 5 SFPF Trainers and provided mini grants to communities for trainings. 34 individuals were trained, and Illuminate Colorado directly facilitated 14 modules for 12 individuals.			
Illuminate Colorado	2022 Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference	Provided in September 2022, Flourishing in Times of Change was the theme for the 2022 Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference. Educational opportunities for professionals across multiple disciplines to explore new strategies and innovative ideas for family strengthening and support were provided.	527	•	
Illuminate Colorado	Child Sexual Abuse Prevention	Stewards of Children Community Training: Illuminate provided 94 virtual trainings in the community, including presentations for early childhood providers, parents, family serving organizations, and professionals. Tip Colorado has expanded outreach and provided virtual access for people across the state of Colorado. The relationship with the Denver College of Nursing has continued, and Illuminate has been asked to train new students each semester, indefinitely. Stewards of Children was offered 84 times and trained 793 adults. In addition, the CDHS has encouraged all	1,474	•	•

		<p>their departments to be trained as well.</p> <p>Mini grants funded 33 trainings with 681 trained. Of those, 5 trainings were co- facilitated with Illuminate.</p> <p>Lines in the Sand: Identifying and Addressing Boundary Violations was offered 6 times and trained 32 adults.</p> <p>What to Expect When Talking the "TALK" was offered 4 times and trained 22 people.</p>			
Illuminate Colorado	Substance Exposed Newborn Prevention	Substance Use Conversation Guide TOT Eight Conversation Guide Trainings	106	•	•
eSym	Motivational Interviewing	Training for site staff through a series of online modules	120	•	•
Children's Trust Fund Alliance	Strategic Sharing Training	CDEC Family Voice Council and other family voice leaders received training on shaping their narrative	30	•	
Irving Harris Program, Department of Psychiatry- University of Colorado School of Medicine	Reflective Supervision	Goal: The cohort of supervisors at CDEC-funded family strengthening sites will participate in didactics and reflective consultation experiences	75	•	•
Advancing Dynamic Solutions	Grant Writing Tips and Tricks	Virtual grant-writing training for sites	57	•	•

Hayward Burnes Institute	Lived Experience	Training on partnering with lived experience members of our workgroups and community	22	•	•
Colorado Dept. of Public Health	Facilitator Training	An 8 module training series for state and program staff on facilitation	18	•	•

Table 2: Training and Professional Development activities by CBCAP funding source

Public Awareness				Funding	
Lead Provider	Initiative	Initiative Detail	# Reached	CBCAP Formula	CBCAP ARPA
Illuminate CO CDEC	Child Abuse Prevention Month Materials and Activities	The Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Campaign partnered to expand awareness of primary prevention during April 2022. More details can be found below under the Child Abuse Prevention Month section of this report.	76,139	•	•
Illuminate CO	Norms Campaign	Illuminate Colorado successfully convened, and provided coordination, facilitation, and logistical support to the Community Norms (CN) Research Advisory Work Group. The CN Research Advisory Work Group provide content and context expertise to the Center for Health and Safety Culture (CHSC) Team at Montana State University, the norms assessment tool development and research team, regarding three pilot surveys. Discussion and feedback primarily centered on survey content, while the CHSC team focused on survey design. Discussions centered on topics such as: examples of informal support, beliefs about informal support, mechanisms through which individuals form		•	•

		social connections, and control beliefs--situations or factors that may make offering/asking for support more likely to occur. Throughout the duration of the project, the CN Research Advisory Work Group met three times via Zoom, and provided rapid response feedback via email four times. The Work Group ended 2021 with 14 active members.			
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Table 3: Public Awareness activities by CBCAP funding source

Evaluation Activities			Funding	
Lead Provider	Initiative	Initiative Detail	CBCAP Formula	CBCAP ARPA
Health eMoms Survey	Colorado Department of Public Health	Support data collection on maternal health.	•	•
Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab	Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families (CPTF) and Family Support through Primary Prevention (FSPP) Evaluations	Conducted evaluation activities to include planning and development of an evaluation plan.	•	•

Table 4: Evaluation activities by CBCAP funding source

Systems Building Activities			Funding	
Lead Provider	Initiative	Initiative Detail	CBCAP Formula	CBCAP ARPA
Illuminate CO CDEC	Backbone for FSPP Project	See description in previous section		•
Collective Progress	CMP 2.0	See description in previous section	•	•

Table 5: Systems Building activities by CBCAP funding source

Other CBCAP Supported Activities			Funding	
Lead Provider	Initiative	Initiative Detail	CBCAP Formula	CBCAP ARPA

Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD)	HealthySteps Expansion	An intermediary, ABCD, was hired to assist with expansion of HealthySteps in the state and assist with maintenance of existing sites. Additionally, implement the newly developed Medicaid billing guide to ensure maximum use and monitor billing.	•	•
Illuminate	Circle of Fathers	Funds to support training and implementation of Circle of Fathers program in the seven sites implementing the Colorado Fatherhood Program.	•	•

Table 6: Other CBCAP-Supported activities by CBCAP funding source

Services Funded through Match and Leveraged Fund		
Program	Description	Services Provided
Family Development in Family Resource Centers	The Family Support Services line was added to the state budget in Spring 2015 to fund family case management, as defined in statute, in family resource centers around the state.	Funding is awarded to 20 family resource centers and the Family Resource Center Association to implement a robust family development model that focuses on family goal setting. Family Support Services state funding is used as a match against CBCAP. CDEC received additional funding starting in July 2022 to fund an additional 10 centers.

Table 7: Services Funded through Match and Leveraged Fund

During this reporting period CBCAP funds were provided to establish seven Circle of Fathers sites throughout the state. The program is designed to meet the unique needs of fathers and provide a network of peer support using the five protective factors. The Circle of Fathers support groups are established within the current Colorado Fatherhood Program sites or another local organization in the community.

Colorado was awarded a Preschool Development Grant (PDG) B-5 renewal grant to implement activities identified in the Colorado Shines Brighter Strategic Plan that maximize the number of high-quality early care and education options available to families, especially families identified as vulnerable and underserved such as those living in rural areas, families with infants and toddlers, and those with children with special needs. As a part of this work, the CBCAP Lead and PDG staff co-created and launched a collaboration and coordination planning mini-grant process to help local entities identify areas to enhance their local early childhood systems through use of a Collaboration Guide and the Toolkit. The toolkit contains information and resources for information sharing, raising awareness of complementary services, cross referrals, shared training, assessments, shared planning, joint funding strategies, and joint operations and shared governance.

The mini-grant opportunity is intended for increased systems collaboration and coordination that improves their community's early childhood system for families of young children, while testing the efficacy of the Coordination Toolkit and Collaboration Guide in spurring and advancing this work. Throughout the year, the group convened workgroups to solidify shared measures for Early Childhood Councils (ECCs), engage in life cycle analysis of ECCs and Family Resource Centers, formalize relationships among the key state agencies, identify training and resources to expand organizational capacity, strengthen local partners, and develop the methodology and requirements for the triennial evaluation of ECCs. Planning grants were awarded to six communities at up to \$10,000 each.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Rules Regulating Therapeutic Foster Care

With the implementation of Family First, CDHS is committed to supporting partners in building up critical levels of family-based care for some of the most vulnerable children and youth that CDHS serves. Therapeutic Foster Care rules went into effect in April 2021. The rules require the certifying agency to be approved by CDHS to provide therapeutic foster care. Once approved, the agency can certify foster homes based on requirements outlined in the rule. OM-CW-2021-0013¹⁹ was issued in September 2021, and addresses standard operating procedures that promote consistent therapeutic and treatment foster care program practices. Three information forums regarding the differences in therapeutic and treatment foster care, requirements, and the approval process for county departments and county placement agencies (CPAs) were provided in October 2021. This was followed up with three learning community sessions that provided opportunities for agencies to brainstorm, network, and further discuss how they would approach policy and procedure development.

Colorado has decided to adopt The Pressley Ridge Training and Model²⁰ for treatment/therapeutic foster care certification. The Pressley Ridge curriculum is guided by a common treatment philosophy called Re-Education (Re-ED). Re-ED focuses on the strengths of each child and family and holds these beliefs: It is possible to teach competence; change is possible; and the development of trusting relationships with caring, committed adults is the most significant factor in turning around the lives of seriously troubled children. Pressley Ridge is not only a curriculum, but also a model that is being implemented by many different states and child placement agencies across the nation.

The goal is to build capacity across the state to increase options for lower levels of care for children/youth in a more family-like setting than congregate care. The Pressley Ridge training curriculum was provided to trainers and agencies in March 2022. Pressley Ridge will also be certifying master trainers to be able to coach trainers across the state. The master trainers will include representatives from DCW as well as from the county and CPAs, to ensure fidelity to the model, training is up-to-date, and to provide technical assistance.

The DCW Learning and Development Team in partnership with the Provider Services Unit and the Permanency Services Unit (Foster Care Administrator) requested \$145,920 from Family

¹⁹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bE7cJVra-IJ_KChT6HNkQNpQ4yj_aBe5/view

²⁰ <https://www.pressleyridge.org/consulting/consultation-training-back-office-support/>

First transition funds to host two cohorts of Pressley Ridge Train-the-Trainer for County and Child Placement Agencies in Colorado who are interested in implementing treatment or therapeutic foster care or both. The acceptance into the training will be based on the following criteria:

- Counties/CPAs will have to have their implementation project either ready to be submitted or already approved by DCW.
- Programs submitted shall meet all the Standard Procedure as outlined in 7.704 Rules Regulating Treatment Foster Care and 7.703 Rules Regulating Therapeutic Foster Care
 - Counties and CPAs will sign a Memorandum of Understanding to train other providers outside of their county/programs.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Please see the Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan in the Updates to Targeted Plans section of this APSR.

Foster Home Certification/Recertification Reviews

Please see the Quality Assurance section of this APSR for information on how ARD conducts Foster Home Certification Reviews. This was also detailed in Goal 5 of the CFSR Round 3 PIP, and details can be found in the PIP progress reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Colorado's engagement in the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC) ensures county departments of human services have access to cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements of waiting children and youth.

In CY 2022, 38 Colorado counties requested out-of-state home studies. Colorado, as the sending agency, submitted 692 home study requests for 762 children. Colorado Counties sent ICPC home studies most frequently to the following states: Texas, Florida, California, Arizona, & Utah.

- Number of home studies completed: 549.
- Approved home studies (by case): 249.
- Placements made out-of-state from these approvals (by case): 170 (CA, TX, FL, WY, KS).

In CY 2022, 32 Colorado counties and 7 CPAs received out-of-state ICPC home study requests. Colorado as the receiving agency, received 331 home study requests for 426 children. The primary states' home studies were received from California, Arizona, Florida, Kansas, and Texas.

- Number of home studies completed by CO: 217.
- Approved home studies: 177.
- Out-of-state placements made from these approvals: 82 (CA, TX, NE, OK, WY).

In CY 2022, Colorado completed 217 home studies, reflecting:

- Number of ICPC home studies that were completed in 60 days or less: 97 (45%).
- Number of ICPC home studies that were completed in 61-75 days: 40 (18%).
- Number of ICPC home studies that were completed in over 75 days: 80 (37%).

Colorado staff can document reasons in Trails for why a home study was not completed timely. For CY 2022 those reasons were primarily due to the following contributing factors (many home studies recorded more than one factor as to why the home studies were not completed timely):

- Provider Issues: 52%.
- Lack of Employee Resources: 34%.
- Missing documentation from the sending state: 8%.
- Other: 5%.

The CDHS ICPC Deputy Compact Administrator (DCA) provided county-specific trainings to ICPC County Liaisons and their staff throughout the year. To ensure all CY 2022 data was entered into the Trails system, the CO ICPC DCA sent out numerous communications to the Colorado counties during January and February 2023 as reminders and worked closely with state IT Trails Analysts to ensure data cleanup and correct reporting throughout the beginning of March. Training assistance was also given to ICPC County Liaisons and their Directors to ensure all data entries for home studies were accurately reflected for interstate home study requests.

Data integrity and data entry errors have been identified as areas for improvement to accurately track efforts to improve timeliness of completed home studies. With the changes and turnover in ICPC staff, many “pending” ICPC home study requests had not been updated with the home study findings to show approvals or denials. Data was added to fix the “pending” status. The CDHS ICPC DCA, the program supervisor, and County ICPC Liaisons will be brainstorming solutions at the ICPC Quarterly meeting scheduled in March 2023 to avoid year end data integrity issues for 2024.

The CDHS ICPC DCA continued to provide monthly training opportunities during ICPC office hours for counties. For compliance issues with residential placements, monthly meetings were held throughout the year with facilities to track placements and discharges in a timely manner. This effort to track compliance issues with other states effectively improved monitoring placements.

Improvements have been made with CPAs accepting out-of-state children into their foster homes. Home study standards and supervision guidance trainings continued to occur throughout CY 2022. CPAs have developed ICPC protocols because of these trainings to increase awareness of the ICPC requirements for new staff.

CO is further streamlining ICPC processes with a successful Google spreadsheet tracking of ICPC placements and discharges for residential and CPA ICPC placements. Colorado is excited to share their contract with the American Public Human Services Association/Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (APHSA/AAICPC) organizations was signed recently in compliance with Family First, which requires that all states to join the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) system for processing ICPC cases by 2027. The first step will be to implement the NEICE Secure Document Portal for better communications with other NEICE states. More information on the implementation will be reported in future APSRs.

Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes

Goal 1: Colorado has a skilled, healthy, and supported child welfare workforce.

Objective 1.1: Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs prepare workers to join the child welfare workforce.

Intervention 1.1.1: Increase the number of IV-E education stipends awarded each year in Colorado.

Over \$260,000 was awarded to all current child welfare scholars in CY 2022. Graduating child welfare scholars continued to participate in individual Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) debriefs to receive their individualized report and Intercultural Development Plan. Qualified Administrators also launched the following learning activities:

- Planning for the Intercultural Development Plan
- Identity and Our Roots and Wings
- Alternative and Complementary Assessments to the IDI
- Rural and Urban Child Welfare and Cultural Intelligence Considerations
- Historical Trauma, ICWA, and My Role Today

During the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year, there were five scholars who withdrew from the Child Welfare Scholars program. Reasons for withdrawal include leaving the child welfare field and challenges within their internships. Another challenge to county partners and current scholars is the turnover and staffing changes at county agencies. These changes have led to internship supervisor changes, which may exacerbate the learning curve for interns, and strains on the existing workforce with higher caseloads and lack of time to provide consistent supervision for the interns participating in the program. Metro and other universities are working with field office and coordinators (those responsible with internships) and counties to identify what their needs are and how to best meet those needs. Additional efforts include an alumni study to identify:

- Career paths of scholars that received a child welfare stipend from CDHS, and whether they plan a short or long-term commitment to the child welfare field.
- What were facilitators and barriers for stipend alumni to build career paths in child welfare in Colorado? What were their experiences of career and professional development?
- For alumni scholars working in child welfare, what were their organizational experiences in Colorado child welfare agencies? Do some counties offer better supports to build commitment and resilience to stay in the workforce? Do these experiences influence one's commitment to child welfare work?

Intervention 1.1.2: Increase the proportion of education stipends awarded to students who live and work in small, rural and/or mid-sized counties.

Each participating university held several program information sessions to recruit potential scholars for the 2022-2023 academic year. Program coordinators also met individually with interested students to discuss program options and individual considerations. The selection process for the 2022-2023 academic year is currently underway and expected to conclude in June 2023. County agencies are continuing to recruit internship field instructors and determine

how many interns they will be able to hire. This continues to be a challenge due to staffing changes and turnover at the county departments, see 1.1.1 for further details.

The Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium (CCWSC) Project Director met with a new county to support their development of an internship program for 3 new internship positions in the 2023-2024 academic year. Metro State University will be hosting a career fair in April 2023 for all counties to attend and recruit program graduates to their counties.

Kay Casey continued to work with CCWSC staff on fiscal monitoring, ensure cost report alignment, and adherence to the IV-E training program requirements. Ongoing discussions are held with the Prospectus Group LLC to develop a Title IV-E reporting database, which will continue into 2023. This database will streamline fiscal monitoring processes and stipend administration for the CCWSC.

CCWSC Research and Evaluation workgroup continued to meet through 2022. MSU Denver and the Butler Institute project staff developed an evaluation proposal and budget to build and enhance previous efforts. The goals that were identified as a result of the Theory of Change work were:

- The CCWSC has a robust research and evaluation agenda.
- Know the workforce needs and continually assess.
- County-specific & statewide evaluation to better inform workforce considerations.
- The CCWSC has a scholar tracking mechanism.

CCWSC leadership began meeting with leadership from the Child Welfare Training System (CWTS) to discuss partnership opportunities as well as unique opportunities to support workforce recruitment efforts.

Objective 1.2: County departments of human/social services are equipped to retain caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and directors.

Intervention 1.2.1: DCW and CWTS will convene and facilitate regional communities of practice for county departments to design and implement strategies to increase worker retention.

DCW continues to utilize Supervisor Learning Exchanges (SLE) statewide for supervisors to participate in a mutual exchange of ideas, strategies, and processes, by utilizing data to improve outcomes. DCW and CWTS also continue to convene and facilitate discussions on recruitment and retention studies, research and evaluation findings, and strategies to engage counties in efforts to recruit and retain the workforce.

Intervention 1.2.2: The CWTS will expand offerings that support assessing and improving organizational health so that managers and leaders are equipped to support case workers and supervisors.

CWTS has issued the second year of a general staff survey to gather data on organizational culture and individual perspectives for all certified caseworkers and supervisors. The data has been used regular to identify and support strategies recruiting and retaining caseworkers, as well as provide ongoing support for DCW and the counties to target interventions,

Measures of Progress for Goal 1

1. *By 2024, improve caseworker retention rate by decreasing caseworker turnover from a baseline of 26% to 24%.*

In CY 2022, caseworker turnover rate was at 24.51%. DCW, in partnership with CWTS, continues to emphasize worker retention efforts. As discussed in Intervention 1.2.1 above, DCW continues to utilize SLEs as a platform for counties to share ideas on how they are

engaging their workforce and using incentive programs. CWTS also offers a course (“Habits for Resiliency”) for caseworkers. Participants in this course will complete various assessments of their own professional burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma. The course has an intentional focus on how to continuously assess levels of stress, and identify protective actions, tools, and skills to incorporate in the field. Participants learn how to develop a self-care plan at the conclusion of the course. 94 participants have taken this course in CY 2022, and this course will continue to be offered in 2023 and beyond.

2. *By 2024, increase the number of IV-E stipends awarded each year from 57 (SFY 2018-19) to 80.*

60 stipends were awarded in 2022. DCW and the CCWSC will be working with two additional universities in 2023 to increase the number of stipends to be awarded. See intervention 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 for further details.

Goal 2: Children, youth, families, and communities are strengthened and thrive through ongoing prevention efforts.

Objective 2.1: Broaden knowledge, understanding and implementation of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework.

Intervention 2.1.1: DCW and CWTS will utilize a CQI process to identify learning activities that help caseworkers, casework supervisors and child welfare leaders understand and utilize the protective factors in their work with families.

The following courses provide in-depth coverage of understanding and utilizing protective factors with families (details from the course catalog follow). In addition, any course that touches on the safety assessment also reviews protective factors as a required element of the assessment and tool completion.

Audience: All (includes caseworkers, caseworker supervisors and child welfare leaders)

- All Families Have Strengths
- Harnessing Protective Factors with Families
- Understanding Opioid Use Disorder: Protective Factors, Child Safety, and Intervention
- Enhancing Practice With Families Impacted by Substance Use
- A Closer Look at Child Sexual Abuse

Audience: Supervisors and Leaders

- Superman Has Nothing on You: Supervising to Safety & Risk

Audience: New Caseworkers

- Safety Through Engagement
- Working Toward Closure
- Building Safety with Families Impacted by Domestic Violence

Objective 2.2: All counties are implementing local child abuse prevention plans.

Intervention 2.2.1: Support counties and Tribes in developing and implementing Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention plans.

Colorado has created the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action²¹, designed as a tool to guide strategic thinking, at the state and local level, about resource investments to prevent child maltreatment and promote child well-being. As this tool is used collectively across the state, the resulting alignment of strategies will maximize the impact on

²¹ <https://co4kids.org/stengthening-families/framework>

shared outcomes. Anchored by six foundational principles, the framework outlines potential strategies that when implemented will achieve four overarching outcomes to ensure that all children are valued, healthy and thriving. The CMP Framework aligns with the Colorado Early Childhood Framework and leverages and links system investment in family support, health, and early childhood education to create a comprehensive early childhood system.

Currently, the CDEC is providing CBCAP financial support for experienced facilitators and county staff to manage logistics, free use of researchers to conduct a parent and community survey, and community planning tools for up to 12 communities to develop a community Child Maltreatment Prevention plan. Those communities with an established plan will have the opportunity to receive implementation dollars for their identified goals starting October 1, 2023. These planning and new implementation communities join 10 current communities currently carrying out a wide variety of CBCAP work across the state spanning individualized services to focus on strategies that change organizational culture and practice; foster collaboration and community efficacy; and influence policy and legislative change. The CMP Framework has become a valuable resource and roadmap for communities and includes a comprehensive toolkit that can be found at CO4Kids.org.

Objective 2.3: Explore and advocate for innovative ways to braid and blend funding for prevention strategies.

Intervention 2.3.1: Identify prevention services in the FFPSA clearinghouse and how they are funded in Colorado.

During the legislative session, a seat was added to the Colorado Child Abuse Prevention (COCAP) Trust Fund Board to include a representative from the CDEC. This seat has since been filled and has a serving member. The board has engaged in conversations regarding the updated powers and duties, updating and reviewing bylaws, and strategic planning. These activities will assist the board to understand how to best utilize all sources of funding to prevent child maltreatment across the state. The board will be working to create a long-term investment plan over the next year, with support from the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab and other community partners.

Nine programs are included in Colorado's Family First Prevention Plan. Five of those programs have been rated as "Well-Supported" on the Clearinghouse, and the remaining four programs have rigorous evaluations in place. Upfront funding varies for each program, and by communities in some cases. Colorado will continue to monitor funding details as the prevention infrastructure continues to expand across the state.

Please see the Prevention sub-section in "Collaboration" of this APSR for further details on how Colorado continues to coordinate and streamline programs, services, and to develop processes for blending and braiding funding sources.

Objective 2.4: Coordinate efforts across systems.

Intervention 2.4.1: Modify the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action to include the Child Fatality Prevention Plan.

Since January 2022, CDEC has been partnering with a consultant, Collective Progress, to enhance the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action and its tools. The significant stakeholder input including local community groups determined that the initial focus needed to be in the EDI space. The input focused on building equity and family voice into all the CMP work; creating a shared understanding of equity terms and strategies; analyzing existing data to identify disparities in Colorado; identifying equity-based strategies and tools to use across all counties in their plans; creating a space for continuous learning on anti-racism with

potential clearinghouse of strategies used by communities; and engagement of voices missing from the conversations. Inclusion of the Child Fatality Prevention Plan and other cross system efforts is ongoing with future revisions of the Child Maltreatment Prevention planning process.

Intervention 2.4.2: Explore the need for statutory change to expand the COCAP Board to include representation from additional systems.

The Colorado Child Abuse Prevention (COCAP) Trust Fund Board was established in 1989 and is charged with preventing the maltreatment of children. The nineteen-member COCAP Trust Fund Board of Directors advises on investments in family strengthening and the implementation of the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action. In 2021, an update to the provisions of the “Colorado Children’s Trust Fund Act” was introduced and received Governor Polis’s final approval. The bill updates various provisions of the “Colorado Children’s Trust Fund Act”, including renaming it the “Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund Act”. Additional changes include:

- Expanding the membership of the Colorado child abuse prevention board from the current 9 members to 17 members which includes three members with lived experience and legislators.
- Expanding the powers and duties of the board to include advising and making recommendations to the Governor, state agencies, and other entities regarding child maltreatment prevention.
- Developing strategies to decrease the incidences of child maltreatment and other adverse childhood experiences; and implementing and monitoring the ongoing development of local child maltreatment prevention plans throughout the state.
- Extending the repeal of the act from 2022 to 2027.
- Directing the Trust Fund to claim any possible reimbursement for prevention services and programs identified in the Colorado Family First Prevention Services plan. The drawdown of these funds could help the state to expand access to these services for Colorado families.

In addition to the legislative updates, the COCAP trust fund board advises on and supports funding for child maltreatment prevention implementation across the state.

During the 2021-2022 state fiscal year, the Board successfully expanded membership from 9 to 19 members, including recruitment of lived experience members; developed revised by-laws; contracted with a consultant, Collective Progress, to lead the board through strategic planning; and held a strategic planning retreat in September 2022.

Intervention 2.4.3: Expand public access to services and resources.

Public access to services and resources are expanded through several service areas discussed elsewhere in this report, including but not limited to the Fatherhood Program (see “Fatherhood Program” in the Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes section of this APSR), Prevention initiatives (see “Prevention” in the Collaboration section of this APSR), and Child First through PSSF and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds (see the Update on Service Descriptions section of this APSR).

The Colorado BHA is also in the process of awarding approximately \$2.5 million in funding as part of the behavioral health-care continuum grant program (House Bill 22-1281²²). The purpose of the grant program is to expand or implement services that have been identified as gaps in Child, Youth, and Family- oriented behavioral health care and to improve outcomes for individuals served.

²² <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1281>

Intervention 2.4.4: Revitalize the Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council (CWELC), creating an interagency oversight group of specifically identified state agencies, community stakeholders and constituents.

After close consideration of existing groups who are already focused on this work, CDHS has determined that this intervention is no longer necessary, and will be removed from the CFSP.

Measures of Progress for Goal 2

1. *By 2024, the child maltreatment rate for children zero to five in Colorado will decrease from 15.7 per 1,000 (2017 baseline year) to 15 per 1,000.*

Colorado continues to meet and exceed the goal for decreasing the child maltreatment rate for children zero to five. In 2022, the child maltreatment rate was 9.72 per 1,000 children. DCW continues to strive for further lowering the child maltreatment rate by participating in ongoing collaborative efforts with the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families (CPTF), the CFPS, and the Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT). The multidisciplinary CFRT Steering Committee continues to identify gaps and provide recommendations across agencies for consideration, streamlining processes and improving cross-system communications.

2. *By 2024, child maltreatment fatalities will decline from 2.77 per 100,000 (2017 baseline year) to 2.32 averaged over five (5) years.*

According to the Children's Bureau, child maltreatment fatality rates dropped to 1.92 in 2020. Please see the previous Measure of Progress for how Colorado is decreasing child maltreatment rates, and subsequently child maltreatment fatalities.

3. *By June 2024, all 64 Colorado counties will be represented by child abuse prevention plans and all plans will include a Child Maltreatment Fatality Prevention Plan.*

See Intervention 2.2.1, and "CBCAP" in the Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes section of this APSR. After further discussions with the CDEC, this measure of progress is being updated to ensure Colorado counties will be supported in the development of child abuse prevention plans, and all implementation sites will have CMP plans, to better reflect the status of this measure.

Goal 3: Children and youth have safe, permanent, and stable living situations with appropriate support.

Objective 3.1: Families receive support to ensure that children/youth remain safely at home.

Intervention 3.1.1: Expand Differential Response (DR) as a statewide intervention.

Statewide implementation of DR has increased to 76% of counties statewide, with 49 counties fully implemented, 12 counties in progress, and 3 that have not yet started.

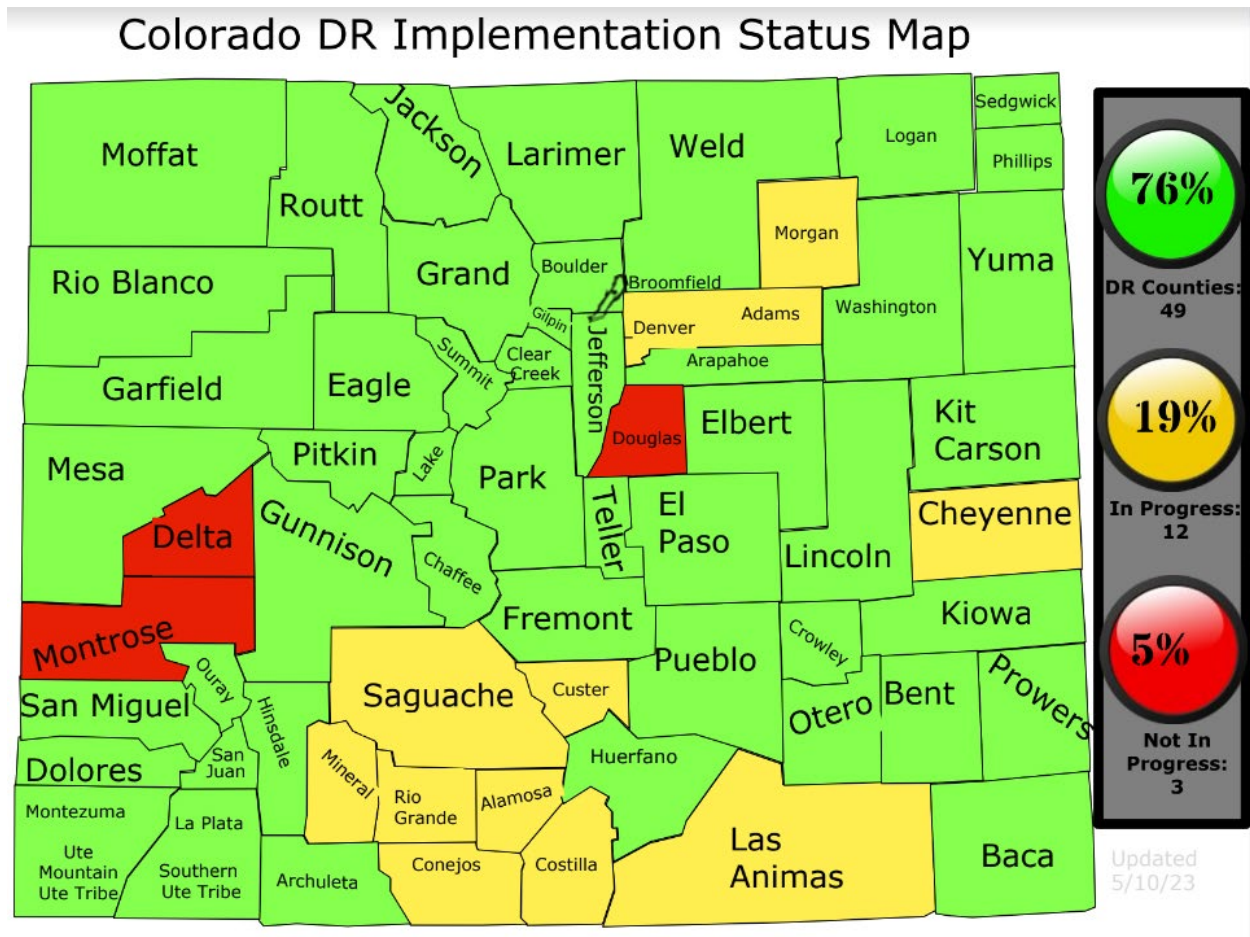


Figure 1: DR implementation status of Colorado counties.

DCW’s DR specialist reached out to the remaining 3 non-DR counties and continue to hold follow-up meetings with all counties who have completed DR implementation to ensure smooth transitions in practice shifts. DCW continues to provide technical assistance to counties and will prioritize completing implementation for the 12 counties in progress. In 2023, DCW also plans to focus intensive efforts to recruit participation from the 3 remaining counties.

COVID-19 had a lasting impact on DR implementation, as trainings, coaching, and technical assistance has shifted to a virtual environment. However, many counties still value the connection made with in-person instruction and collaboration. Efforts have been made to increase flexibility and individualize learning environments and experiences to accommodate county needs.

Intervention 3.1.2: Enhance the social history process and include families in identification of the child/youth/family needs.

At this time, efforts at including families in the identification of child/youth/family needs has been centered around Family Engagement Meetings. DCW has partnered with counties across the state to help design a statistical report in ROM that will aid counties in identifying cases with overdue meetings and identifying trends in data, including participation rates of key participants, and performance by caseworker/unit/section. The draft report has been created and is pending development in ROM. In addition, DCW is working with county partners to develop a quality assurance process for family engagement meetings. This process will provide counties with a path for having frameworks reviewed or meetings observed by county peers to help promote

quality meetings. Reviews will focus on the promotion of meeting family needs and pursuing case progress with urgency. It is anticipated that this process will be available for county use in July of 2023.

Objective 3.2: When children/youth must be temporarily removed, they are placed with kin, and kin receive support to maintain connections between the child/youth and family.

Intervention 3.2.1: Enhance the social history process and include families in identification of the child/youth/family needs.

Please see Intervention 3.1.2.

Intervention 3.2.2: Design, implement, and evaluate the Kinship Navigator Model Pilot. The Colorado Kinconnected Navigator was rated as “Promising” by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse in December 2022. Colorado became the second state to be approved for the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator program on May 18th, 2023, with approval to begin requesting reimbursement on April 1st, 2023. Orientation and implementation materials, fidelity monitoring processes, and fidelity monitoring tools are in development. Two piloting counties began implementation in April 2023, and up to seven new counties are expected to implement by September 2023. Colorado intends to continue to roll out implementation of the program statewide over the next few years.

Intervention 3.2.3: Kinship assessments will be completed for all placements with kin.

A kinship evaluation template was developed and implemented in February 2022. Development was done in partnership with kinship staff from county departments. The template covers all areas required by rule and is available to all county departments regardless of whether they currently have a county-specific template. Feedback was gathered from the counties, and modifications were made in June 2022. At the time of writing this APSR, the kinship evaluation template has not been utilized long enough to determine its effects on county kinship evaluation compliance. Use of this template is being monitored through the non-certified kinship care reviews, and further details will be reported in the next APSR.

Continued observations through the non-certified kin reviews show that use of the kinship evaluation template results in better written evaluations of kinship families.

Objective 3.3: Families are reunified with supports and services to ensure safety.

Intervention 3.3.1: Coordinate with CIP and BPCTs to develop processes to improve the timeliness of permanency hearings.

CDHS partnered with CIP to obtain court data related to timeliness and permanency. The data has been shared within CDHS, but it was also determined that the data sharing agreement with CDHS and Judicial needs to be updated. Please see the SANCA updates in the Statewide Information System section of this APSR.

Intervention 3.3.2: Improve Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliance in Dependency and Neglect cases.

DCW’s Research, Analysis, and Data team continues to work on data sharing agreements with judicial partners to allow DCW to track court information more closely related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). CDHS has begun holding ICWA office hours for counties to allow caseworkers or other county staff the opportunity to staff cases, ask questions related to ICWA, or guidance in contacting Tribes.

In 2022, the ARD resumed in-person case reviews on a hybrid basis, resuming ICWA compliance tracking across counties, which were previously paused due to COVID-19. The

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) 2.0 also included an update in Trails Mod, which will increase the information that is documented and stored in the Trails database.

The Colorado Court of Appeals workgroup is currently working to put together an ICWA Rules and Resources document for courts across the state to utilize. This document will be provided in future APSRs once it has been released.

Intervention 3.3.3: Redesign the foster care system in Colorado so foster/kinship providers provide ongoing support to the child/youth's family.

An area of ongoing work in foster care redesign is supporting and promoting how the child welfare system views the role of foster parents, moving away from foster parents being seen as substitute parents, and moving toward caretaking in a way that supports permanency, including the transition to reunification if deemed appropriate. To create systemic shifts in mindset, DCW recognizes the importance of collaborative efforts between systems and the people served. A standing agenda item in the Foster Care Quarterly meeting highlights foster parents' experiences working with the family to emphasize the importance of this collaboration.

The DCW Kinship and Foster Care Administrators prioritized steps to address the recommendations of the Kinship Foster Care Task Group. In the first quarter of 2022, the task group continued developing a structure for a kinship foster care program that is more inclusive of child-specific placements, with a reduction in non-safety certification rules, and a strategy to achieve permanency for those children/youth whether it is reunification, adoption, or guardianship. The latter two programs have assistance agreements to support stable permanency. Foster care rules were reviewed by the task group and recommendations for revisions are in process, rates were reviewed, and fiscal impacts have been researched. The Kinship Foster Care Task Group has put forth training requirements and initial rule recommendations for future proposed legislative changes. A Situation Background Assessment Recommendation (SBAR) was completed for this, including fiscal impact.

Research about professional foster parenting was reviewed and shared with the Provider Services Unit to consider partnering as a model. A Request for Proposal (RFP) to support a limited pilot will be issued and supervised by that team in collaboration with the Permanency Unit. To help DCW with readiness, a short-term contract for consultation with an agency that has implemented such a program will occur in Quarter 2. Further work will also occur to research how other states get approval to claim federal funding similar to QRTP. A barrier will be recruiting foster parents that can commit to the placement of a child/youth with an extreme level of acuity for the length of time in this level of care.

Approved Short Term Care (ASTC) is a new type of provider being developed that can offer breaks to foster parents and the children/youth in their care. The Time-Limited Foster Care Task Group, DCW staff, and case review staff developed a structure for a provider type that would allow individuals to provide short-term non-emergency care. ASTC rules were written and approved by the Permanency Task Group. Further details will be provided in future APSRs.

Separate surveys were completed for counties, foster parents, and child placement agencies regarding their perspectives on policies and practices related to foster parents working with the parents (or legal custodians) of the children and youth in care. The data was analyzed and will be used in scheduled stakeholder meetings. Information collected from the surveys will be used to obtain further detail from the stakeholders. The goal is to:

1. Garner a clearer representation of current practice.

2. Solicit feedback about positive practices occurring.
3. Discuss strategies to improve policies and practices to encourage relationship-building between foster parents and the parents (legal custodians) of the children in their care.

An analysis of the stakeholders' feedback and recommendations will be completed in Q1 2023. As there is currently proposed legislation impacting kinship and foster care processes at the time of writing this APSR, further details will be provided in future reports.

Intervention 3.3.4: Family engagement meetings are held throughout the family's involvement and in a way that supports safety, permanency, and well-being.

Through 2022 and 2023, DCW and CWTS have partnered to hold monthly Enhanced Community Health Outcomes (ECHO) trainings with facilitators around the state. This series centers on creating discussion around key topics relevant to facilitation. CWTS also hosts Introduction to Facilitation trainings quarterly, to provide foundational training for new facilitators, and refresher trainings to current facilitators. Facilitator's Forums are also held quarterly to provide training opportunities, as well as networking opportunities for facilitators across the state.

DCW provides statistical information every month upon county request, to aid counties in using data to inform practice changes around overdue facilitated family engagement meetings. DCW also works with county facilitation leads to draft the outline of a new ROM report, that will provide easily accessible information on family engagement meetings. This will include the number and types of meetings being held, participation rates by participant, specific cases needing meetings, and aggregate data on meetings held. This is currently under development at the time of writing this APSR.

DCW has partnered with facilitation leads across the state to develop a quality assurance process for family engagement meetings. The process will look to promote the right fit of services for families, the promotion of family engagement values, and urgency towards case progress. Participating county facilitators will receive training hours for reviewing frameworks or observing meetings and providing feedback. This process will be ready for implementation in the Summer of 2023.

DCW continues to provide support in helping counties to meet the C-Stat goal of 66% of clients receiving a family engagement meeting at reunification. This includes providing quarterly training, training by request, and technical assistance. Additional resources have also been created in support of this measure, including a reunification supervisor approval form and a guide to using the Family Engagement at Reunification ROM report.

Measures of Progress for Goal 3

1. *By 2024, all 64 counties will implement DR.*
See Intervention 3.1.1 above.
2. *Colorado will decrease the average daily OOH population per 1,000 from 4.2 (ROM average for CY 2018) to 3.8 by June 30, 2024.*
The average daily OOH population per 1,000 continues to decrease from 3.36 in CY 2021, to 2.98 in CY 2022. This measure is a Wildly Important Goal (WIG) for DCW's accountability to the Governor's office. This measure is also closely tracked in C-STAT, and DCW's permanency specialist reviews any child under the age of 12, who is in residential care, on a quarterly basis, and works with counties to discuss how each individual child is working towards permanency.

Timeliness to Permanency is also a key focus of Colorado's CFSR Round 3 PIP, which also impacts the average daily OOH population. Please see "Permanency Outcome 1" in the Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes section of this APSR for further details.

3. *Colorado's five-year average of the number of children/youth who re-enter care will decrease from 1.0% (ROM, Point-in-Time data March 2019) to 0.5% by June 30, 2024. The state's re-entry measure monitors the percent of children/youth discharged to reunification, living with a relative, guardianship or adoption during the last 12 months who re-entered care during each month.*

The five-year average of the number of children/youth who re-entered care is 1.09% in CY 2022. Please see "Permanency Outcome 1" in the Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes section, and the Permanency section in Updates on Service Description for detailed information on how Colorado is ensuring permanency for children/youth.

4. *By 2024, the rate of initial placement with relatives (of those entering care) will improve from 39.5% (ROM data CY 2018) to 50%*

In CY 2022, the rate of initial placement with relatives (of those entering care) is 48.2%. See Intervention 3.2.2 above.

5. *Redesign foster care recruitment processes and communications to align with the FFPSA philosophy that foster parents are supports, not substitutes, for families.*

In September of 2021, CDHS conducted a series of four focus groups with current and potential foster parents to better understand the barriers and motivations of foster parents. A new digital advertising campaign was developed to highlight the insights gathered from the focus groups. The campaign addressed two themes related to reunification: maintaining connections with youth after achieving permanency and supporting reunification as a goal of foster care.

In 2022, an episode of CO4Kids Live: The Arena featured a foster parent panel discussion on overcoming barriers to becoming a foster parent. One of the barriers discussed was the fear around biological families and grief and loss when a child is reunified. The panelists discussed how foster parents can build a rapport with biological parents, have lasting relationships with biological families, and continue to be a part of a child/youth's life after reunification.

6. *Develop a communication plan with internal and external stakeholders regarding messaging about the redesign in foster care recruitment processes.*

CDHS employs a variety of tactics to communicate with internal and external stakeholders regarding the need for foster and adoptive parents.

The Colorado Heart Gallery highlights children and youth who are waiting to be adopted. CDHS contracts with Raise the Future, a non-profit dedicated to helping youth in foster care achieve permanency, to manage this project. Website analytics indicating interest in the Colorado Heart Gallery has remained consistent since 2019. In CY22, the Colorado Heart Gallery website was viewed over 88,000 times by visitors who explored nearly 362,000 pages and watched 33,800 videos. Additionally, child-specific videos on the Raise the Future website and county websites were viewed nearly 20,300 times.

During CY 2022, the adoptions of two children and youth who had been on the Colorado Heart Gallery were finalized (one of whom was a youth of color), an additional 10 children and youth were placed with families who had taken guardianship or permanent custody (20% of whom were youth of color), an additional 35 children and youth were placed pre-adoptive family (34% of whom were youth of color), and lastly, an additional 20 children were matched with a pre-adoptive family (30% of who were youth of color).

During SFY 21-22, 26 youth were photographed, and 21 videos were produced for the Colorado Heart Gallery. Additionally, 65 youth profiles on AdoptUSKids were created or updated. The Colorado Heart Gallery Facebook page shared 167 posts featuring Colorado Heart Gallery Youth, which had an average reach of 3,411 during CY22. Promoted (i.e., paid) Facebook posts for 30 children and youth reached an average of 80,056 individuals per post.

Social media and digital advertising continue to be a key awareness tactic for Colorado. In CY22, general foster care posts on the Colorado Foster Care Facebook page received an average monthly page reach of 109,282 and posts on the Colorado Heart Gallery Facebook page had an average month reach of 288,172.

During SFY 21-22 a digital foster care campaign ran for 13 weeks from Feb. 14 to May 15 and the campaign featured short video advertising placements on Facebook, Google, Nextdoor, and other digital platforms. Additionally, digital display ads ran in healthcare offices, gyms, and restaurants in key regions. With a 25% increase in advertising spend, OCYF saw an 88% increase in digital primary campaign impressions, a 133% increase in completed video views, and a 9% increase in website sessions attributed to the digital campaigns.

There were more than 4.5 million completed video views from the digital foster care video campaigns. Facebook digital ads had 192,153 completed views and directly contributed to 52,783 CO4Kids.org website sessions, which accounted for 68% of all the campaign's website sessions.

Google ads ran from Dec 1, 2021, to June 12, 2022, so when people in Colorado searched targeted keyword phrases related to fostering or adopting in Colorado, they were served a CO4Kids text ad with a call to action to learn more. Google search ads had the second highest number of attributed website sessions at 13,454. The search terms that drove the most clicks to the website included "children for adoption," "foster care Colorado," "adoption and foster care," "foster care," and "foster care certification."

Since 2018, CDHS has incorporated storytelling into digital advertising campaigns to educate the public about becoming a foster or adoptive parent. The SFY 21-22 foster care campaigns incorporated short stories, featuring Colorado foster parents from a variety of communities, sharing their different perspectives about their foster parenting. CDHS and select counties have identified Latinx, Black, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning + (LGBTQ+) individuals as important audiences for foster parent recruitment. Given this, digital ads developed specifically to reach these audiences are planned for the remainder of SFY 22-23.

Campaigns also lead people to an inquiry form on CO4Kids.org where interested parties can request a follow-up from county departments of human/social services and child placement

agencies in their area to get more information about the certification process. During CY22, 1,627 people submitted an inquiry form to counties and child placement agencies.

The use of photos and stories from current foster and adoptive families is a key element of the recruitment communication strategy. CDHS produced 10 new family videos in 2022 that show foster parents as a support to biological families and address misconceptions, benefits, and perceived barriers around becoming a foster or adoptive parent. When selecting families to feature, CDHS considers the families' race and ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity, location within the state, experience, and commitment to foster care and adoption, dedication to supporting biological families, and unique story. Five videos for [National Foster Care Month](#) received a total of 10,666 organic views while five videos for National Adoption Month received a total of 1,696 organic views on Facebook. These views are in addition to video views from the paid digital advertising campaign.

In February 2022, a second season of CO4Kids Live: The Arena, a Facebook Live series to give foster parents a place to connect and have honest conversations, was filmed. Leveraging a partnership with Foster Source, three additional episodes aired in February, April, and June and an additional three episodes are planned to air during the remainder of SFY 22-23. The second season's episodes focused on overcoming barriers like healthcare, transportation, supporting teens in foster care, treatment foster care, and even taking a vacation. With a modest pre-event and post-show promotion, the three episodes received 624,015 impressions and 2,220 completed video views. Although CO4Kids Live has a smaller audience size than the campaign targeting potential foster parents, the audience consisted of engaged current foster parents who were grateful for the resources being provided as well as potential foster parents who are interested in hearing experienced foster parents discuss their experiences.

Family videos are shared online at CO4Kids.org, on Facebook, and are made available to counties and CPAs. During CY22, the OCYF communications team was understaffed so the Parent Partner blog and newsletter projects were paused and will resume when the team has the bandwidth to relaunch these projects. CDHS continued to publish a monthly professional newsletter with information and resources about recruitment and retention. In CY22, the average open rate for this newsletter was 43%.

Community outreach is an integral part of Colorado's recruitment and retention plan. During CY22, CDHS hosted foster care recruitment booths at large in-person community events including the Denver March Powwow, Cinco de Mayo, the Juneteenth Music Festival, Denver PrideFest, and the Pueblo Chile Festival and engaged with diverse communities to raise awareness about the need for foster families.

Finally, appreciation is a key element to Colorado's recruitment and retention strategy. CDHS hosted annual celebration events during National Foster Care Month in May and National Adoption Month in November to recognize families for their contribution to the community. During CY 22, CDHS held two events at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science to acknowledge 10 adoptive and foster families from across the state for their outstanding dedication to supporting children and youth involved in the child welfare system. The families were celebrated with personalized plaques of recognition and a highlight video reel featuring each family. The families and their guests received free admission to the museum before and after the luncheon, and CDHS covered accommodations and travel expenses for out-of-town honorees.

Goal 4: Youth who leave foster care in Colorado have the tools necessary to be safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing young adults.

Objective 4.1: Youth currently and formerly in foster care have access to developmentally appropriate life experiences and services.

Intervention 4.4.1: Increase access to Independent Living Arrangements (ILA) for youth 18 and older.

The implementation of House Bill 21-1094²³ has significantly increased access to Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP), which was formerly known as the ILA. Additionally, the passage of House Bill 22-1038²⁴ requires that client-directed counsel for youth appointed for children or youth 12 years of age or older provide specialized client-directed legal representation. For more information on HB 21-1094 and the Foster Youth in Transition (FYIT) program, please see the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) (section 477 of the Act) section of this APSR.

Intervention 4.1.2: Ensure services to support all students in foster care in earning a high school credential.

Senate Bill 21-274²⁵ created a statewide Facility Schools Model Workgroup to improve Colorado's facility schools and create a sustainable model to better serve youth accessing facility school services. Representatives from DCW, HCPF, Division of Youth Services (DYS), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Special Education Directors, school districts, licensed facility school providers, parents, and county departments of human/social services are participating in the workgroup. The workgroup is in the process of creating a new model that will offer better educational and treatment outcomes for students in foster care by streamlining the licensing processes, addressing the insufficient capacity issues throughout the state, and increasing the funding for facility schools that provide the resources needed to serve the needs of the youth. Once the final draft bill is approved by the Joint Budget Commission, implementation of the approved model will ensue between July 1, 2023- July 1, 2027.

DCW continues to partner with the CDE to ensure that staff at all school districts are appropriately trained and prepared to provide support for students in foster care required by the Every Student Succeeds Act and Colorado House Bill 18-1306²⁶. Conversations continue with CDE around increasing the use of the multiple pathways model to support more students in achieving graduation in a variety of ways that are appropriate to their skills and experience. In 2022, HB 22-1374²⁷, the Foster Care Success Act, was passed. The bill introduced a mandatory training component for child welfare workers and supervisors as well as child welfare education liaisons at the school districts. This requirement was added to Title 22 for both school and department of human service staff (22.32.138 (1.5)(a)(II)(B)). DCW continues to partner with the CDE to create this training that staff must take once every two years. Several meetings have been held and the agencies will work in partnership with Colorado Welfare Training System to host the pre-recorded training. The bill also added mandatory data sharing between CDHS, DCW, and CDE.

²³ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1094>

²⁴ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1038>

²⁵ https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021a_274_signed.pdf

²⁶ https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018A/bills/2018a_1306_enr.pdf

²⁷ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1374>

Intervention 4.1.3: The Chafee Program for a Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) will be available to every eligible youth currently and formerly in foster care in Colorado.

HB 21-1094 created a state grant program that ultimately will be funded through state funding that ensures that Chafee-like services are accessible throughout the state of Colorado. The RFA process has been completed, and vendors will cover an additional six counties in the state that are not currently covered by the Chafee program. CDHS is in the process of creating a contract for the vendors to ensure quality services are provided to the eligible youth in the six counties. The advisory board will continue to work on the application and funding process to prepare for the next round of funding beginning in SFY 2023.

Objective 4.2: Youth are involved in case planning, and their voice is valued and respected in decisions.

Intervention 4.2.1: Roadmap to Success (RTS) plans will be in place for all eligible youth.

See Measure of Progress 1 for completion rate of RTS plans for all eligible youth. Mandatory reviews are conducted to ensure RTS plans are in place for all youth involved with FYIT. House Bill 21-1094 also included provisions for courts to ensure that the county department made reasonable efforts to implement the participating youth's case plan, including the Roadmap to Success plan.

Intervention 4.2.2: Coordinate with BPCT and CIP to ensure youth have meaningful, current Emancipation Transition Plans (ETP) prior to emancipation.

As part of the implementation of HB 21-1094, judicial review of the ETP is required in FYIT cases prior to discharge, as well as in dependency and neglect cases, and has been codified in 19-7-310(1), 19-7-313(1)(a), and 19-3-705(4)(a); C.R.S.

A bench card was developed for magistrates and judges who are supervising and providing judicial review for these cases. The judicial requirement for review of these plans have ensured that ETPs were completed prior to the youth existing care, and that they meet all statutory and regulatory requirements.

Colorado will begin to include ETPs completed early as part of the completion compliance measure.

Intervention 4.2.3: Youth, caregiver and parent representation have an active voice in training and professional development activities.

As part of a partnership between DCW, the BHA, and CDPHE, approximately a dozen youth were trained to become Positive Youth Development trainers in 2022. During Youth Awareness Week, which was hosted in July 2022, youth participated in youth engagement and professional development workgroups, and as panelists during a youth-moderated town hall.

DCW is planning the third Youth Awareness Week in September 2023, and has ensured that youth are involved in youth engagement workgroups, including planning for another statewide town hall panel. CWTS has also created a family voice initiative to consult with families and youth during training development. DCW is working to fill a vacant position in the Training Steering Committee with a youth or family voice.

Measures of Progress for Goal 4

1. *By 2024, 90% of all youth in OOH care and age 14 and older will have a Roadmap to Success (RTS) completed in Trails. These counts will not include youth in DYS.*

In 2022, 83.96% of all youth in OOH care who are age 14 and older had a RTS completed in Trails.

2. *By June 2024, the percentage of emancipating youth from OOH care (over the age of 18) whose last placement was an ILA will increase from 29% to 40%, by decreasing the percent of youth whose last placement was a residential facility, foster care, or runaway. These counts will not include youth in DYS.*

In CY 2022, the percentage of youth emancipating from OOH care has decreased to 19.7%. This can be attributed to the FYiT program and its voluntary nature, and the efforts to provide developmentally appropriate services created by the FYiT program. More details on this are discussed in the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) (section 477 of the Act) section of this APSR.

3. *By June 2024, 90% of youth emancipating from OOH care will have timely transition plans (completed during the 90 days prior to emancipation). These counts will not include youth in DYS.*

In CY 2022, 50% had ETPs completed early or timely. See intervention 4.2.2 for further details.

4. *Increase the five-year high school graduation rate for youth in OOH care from 29.6% (SFY 17-18) to 40%. These counts will not include youth in DYS.*

The five-year high school graduation rate for youth in OOH care for SFY 21-22 is 36.5% and the five-year high school completion rate for youth in OOH care for SFY 21-22 is 45.6%. While COVID-19 continues to create complex challenges for this goal, school districts were able to provide access to remote learning technology to students, ensuring that children are receiving appropriate services to meet their educational needs. Due to remote learning, students were able to maintain the same school, regardless of placement changes.

Quality Assurance

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team

The Learning and Development team within DCW conducted a CQI training in the Fall of 2021 for county intermediaries, and DCW is rolling out an internal CQI team to build a broader CQI framework internally and externally. The CQI team is currently setting the foundation for this framework to ensure sustainability, adherence to fidelity, consistency, and alignment with statewide initiatives. In early 2022, DCW began an internal CQI process to improve statewide performance on monthly parent contacts. The team has created a form for new referrals and has opened to the entire division for referrals. The team is also working on adapting the original training to meet the needs of new county intermediaries and other DCW staff who need training. DCW will be working on training for DCW leadership and expand referrals to include counties on performance action plans.

The Administrative Review Division (ARD)

The ARD manages the qualitative case review portion of Colorado's child welfare and adult protective services quality assurance system. The ARD's vision is to create a safe and promising future for children and at-risk adults, by strengthening the communities, families, and systems that work to make that future possible. The ARD is a neutral third party that facilitates case reviews, gathers, and analyzes data, publishes research, and provides training and technical assistance to affect change in practice, policy and programs that lead to improved outcomes for Colorado's children and at-risk adults.

Within Colorado's child welfare system, the ARD serves as an independent third-party review system under the auspices of CDHS. The ARD manages quality assurance and quality improvement programs for Colorado's child welfare systems. Specifically, the ARD is the mechanism responsible for the federally required Case Review System and the broader qualitative case review portion of the Quality Assurance System.

With an ultimate passion of enhancing the safety, permanency and well-being of Colorado's children, the ARD works closely with Colorado's counties to train, measure, and assess their adherence to State and Federal regulations. Such regulations are in place to help prevent unnecessary moves for children in foster care and to assess (and encourage) that the needs of the families' and children are being appropriately addressed. The ARD also collaborates with the DCW to enhance policies and practice expectations designed to improve outcomes for children and families.

The ARD currently conducts reviews of the following populations:

Administrative/Periodic Reviews

The ARD reviews all children in the child welfare system who are in out-of-home care for at least six months, and every six months thereafter if the child remains in care. Reviews are also conducted every six months for youth in DYS who are in a community placement.

Colorado's case review instrument, and process, has been established to ensure that Colorado complies with federal requirements. These include the following:

- 45 CFR 1357.15 (u)²⁸, which requires a quality assurance system that regularly assesses the quality of services provided under the CFSP, and
- Section 475 (5) of the Social Security Act²⁹, which requires the case review system to assure:
 - Each child has a case plan designed to achieve placement in a safe setting and it is the least restrictive and most appropriate setting available in close proximity to the parents’ home, and meets the best interest and needs of the child,
 - Further assure:
 - The safety of the child,
 - The continuing necessity for and appropriateness of placement,
 - Extent of compliance with the case plan,
 - Extent of progress made toward alleviating/mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care,
 - Opportunities for the child/youth to engage in age and/or developmentally appropriate activities,
 - Procedural safeguards are applied specific to permanency hearings, filing petitions for the TPR, changes in placements, removal of the child from the home, etc.,
 - Health and education records are in the case file, and any identified services required for the health or education of the child are being provided,
 - When a child has been in care for 15 of the 22 past months, a petition for TPR has been filed, or a compelling reason exists for not filing,
 - Appropriate independent living and transition plans and services are in place for older youth,
 - Credit reporting checks are conducted for older youth, and,
 - The status of each child is reviewed no less frequently than once every six months.
- Section 475 (6) of the Social Security Act³⁰, which defines an “administrative review” as a review that is open to the participation of the parents of the child, and is conducted by an individual not responsible for the case management or delivery of services to the child or parents.

This process also meets the federal requirements outlined in 5 CFR 1355.34 (C (3))³¹, which requires the quality assurance system is:

- In place in the jurisdictions within the State where services included in the CFSP are provided.
 - The ARD conducts administrative, qualitative, case reviews of children and youth placed into foster care in all 64 of Colorado’s counties. Additionally, the ARD conducts these reviews for youth placed into the Department’s custody with the DYS.
- Able to evaluate the adequacy and quality of services provided under the CFSP.
 - The ARD’s instrument has a series of questions designed to review the adequacy of the services included in the case plan, as well as those that are

²⁸ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2014-title45-vol4/pdf/CFR-2014-title45-vol4-sec1357-15.pdf>

²⁹ https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title04/0475.htm

³⁰ https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title04/0475.htm

³¹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2011-title45-vol4/pdf/CFR-2011-title45-vol4-sec1355-34.pdf>

being provided to each child/youth and their family, specific to their permanency goal(s).

- Able to identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system it evaluates.
 - The ARD's instrument is designed with a response set that allows for the identification of both case specific and systemic strengths and barriers to meeting the needs of Colorado's children/youth and families. Specifically, the response set items identified as within a county departments' direct influence (e.g., sending notification of a child/youth with potential Native American heritage to specific tribes) as well as those that are broader, systemic issues (e.g., Native American Tribes not responding to inquiries of Native American heritage).
- Providing reports to agency administration on the quality of services evaluated and areas of needed improvement.
 - The ARD's case review instrument, implemented within Colorado's CCWIS, allows for the creation and dissemination of routine aggregate reports (e.g., quarterly performance reports), as well as more advanced, ad-hoc analysis. Because the case review instrument exists within the CCWIS system, it allows for advanced statistical analysis of specific case practice factors that may be related to a child/youth's safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Evaluating measures implemented to address identified problems.
 - The ARD's case review instrument consists of questions that have remained stable over time, as well as ad-hoc questions. For areas of case practice where expectations do not experience frequent change, these stable questions allow for trend analysis sensitive to how other systems-level changes impact practice in these areas. Ad-hoc questions are often added to the instrument when new practice expectations are implemented. This creates an immediate feedback loop that informs early implementation efforts and allows for any necessary adjustments to be made in a more responsive and timely manner.

In addition to these specific areas, the ARD's qualitative case review instrument has items and response sets designed to measure the quality of case practice in the following areas:

- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Educational stability and progress
- Frequency and quality of contacts with the child/youth and parents
- Engagement of the child/youth and parents in case planning
- Adequacy of visitation between the child/youth and their siblings and parents
- Timeliness of Title IV-E eligibility

Lastly, the Administrative Review instrument has been mapped to the CFSR items. This theory-based approach focuses on mapping practice areas to specific child welfare outcomes they are believed to influence. In other words, improved practice in specific areas should result in enhanced outcomes for children and families along specific CFSR Items. Instructions for the review instrument are directly linked to Federal and State statute, Colorado' child welfare program rules, and are additionally informed by direct citations from the federal Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI).

Foster Home Certification Reviews

The purpose of the annual foster home certification review is to determine if county departments of human/social services are complying with certification requirements for foster homes and kinship foster homes as outlined in the Code of Colorado Regulations, Colorado Revised

Statute, and federal law. A thorough and qualitative case review of the county certified provider case file is completed to determine if the certifying county and provider are in compliance with rules and regulations during the review period to provide a safe living environment for children in Out-of-Home care. Questions on this instrument were designed to help address CFSR Item 33: Standards Applied Equally on the OSRI regarding how well the State applies standards equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

Any foster home or kinship foster home that is certified by a county department of human/social services is eligible for review by the ARD, Foster Home Certification Review. These reviews are conducted once a year for any county with certified foster homes (A foster home or kinship foster home can be reviewed if the Trails approval screen indicates a "Pending" and "Certify" status for a provider). Reviews are conducted on a random sample with a 90% confidence level and a 10% confidence interval.

Qualified Residential Treatment Program Reviews

As part of Family First implementation, the responsibility for reviewing the ongoing necessity and appropriateness of QRTP placements was added to the ARD. These reviews started during CY 2021. The QRTP Placement Review instrument is in the Trails system, so data from the reviews is stored directly in Colorado's CCWIS. Within child welfare, the courts will always conduct the first QRTP review. Subsequent reviews, contingent on the request and desire of the case participants, can then be conducted by the ARD. For DYS, the ARD conducts all QRTP reviews. In Colorado, review of the ongoing appropriateness of QRTP placements occurs every 90 days.

Institutional Abuse Screen-Out Reviews

The purpose of the monthly statewide institutional abuse screen-out review is to determine if county departments of human/social services are appropriately screening out institutional abuse referrals as outlined in the Code of Colorado Regulations and Colorado Revised Statutes. A random sample (90% confidence level with a 10% interval) of statewide screened out institutional abuse referrals is reviewed monthly and a thorough and qualitative case review of the counties' decision to screen out the institutional abuse referrals is completed based on information contained within Trails. The source for all information used during this review is the Colorado Trails database. A review of each hotline call can be completed when needed. If the review determines the referral should have been assigned, it is then sent for a second level consideration by staff from DCW and two county departments. If the second level concurs that the referral should have been assigned, ARD staff notify the county department of the finding. Additionally, the ARD compiles aggregate data reports on a quarterly basis and provides those to DCW.

Hotline Reviews

The ARD conducts qualitative reviews of the state's hotline system. Each month, the ARD conducts qualitative case reviews of three populations of calls (Child Welfare, Information and Referral, and Inquiries). Reviews are based on a random sample (90% confidence level with a 10% interval) of statewide calls from each population. Within this process, if the review identifies that a) a call met the definition of a referral, but was not entered into Trails as a referral, or b) a referral was screened out that was determined to have met criteria, the ARD identifies these as an Issue for Administration and notifies DCW, as well as the appropriate county (or, the Hotline County Connection Center, if they processed the call). The ARD also compiles aggregate data

reports on a quarterly basis and provides ad-hoc reports to counties with results of reviews from their counties when requested. It should be noted that, as it is a statewide sample, county level results are not generalizable.

Child Fatality Review Team

For information on the CFRT, please see the Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths section of this APSR.

CFSR Round 3 PIP

The ARD is responsible for the completion of the measurement methodology for Colorado's Round 3 CFSR PIP. This includes conducting 65 reviews across six counties and the Division of Youth Services every six months. While the ARD is using the federal OSRI as a measurement tool throughout the duration of Colorado's PIP, due to the lack of generalizability of the findings, it is not used as part of Colorado's routine CQI/Quality Assurance system. However, information from the other qualitative case review processes, administrative/quantitative data, and stakeholder feedback groups are used to provide more in-depth and generalizable information as to Colorado's statewide performance across the CFSR Items.

In planning for the CFSR Round 4 reviews, CDHS is having ongoing discussions around the ability to conduct a State Case Review process, and the continuation of aligning internal tools with the OSRI during Colorado's CQI/Quality Assurance processes.

Use of Qualitative Case Review Data

Data collected from the various qualitative case reviews are integrated into numerous CQI and CFSR PIP processes. These include:

- CFSR Program Improvement Plan Implementation Team meetings and discussions.
- CDHS C-STAT discussions
- CDHS Child Welfare Sub-PAC rule and work group assignment

Child Welfare Quality Assurance Updates

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Colorado made numerous changes to the qualitative case review processes to continue to provide quality assurance and continuous quality improvement assistance while ensuring the safety of state and county staff as well as the children, families, and other key case participants who are invited to reviews. Primary among these were the transition of the Administrative Reviews and CFSR PIP reviews to occurring virtually using video and teleconferencing.

Having conducted these reviews via virtual platforms for over three years, the ARD determined virtual reviews can be an effective methodology. Notably, in several county departments, participation of parents and other stakeholders increased with the transition to virtual participation. In many ways, virtual participation, through reducing the need to travel to and from a county department office, may reduce barriers to participation for families and others (such as Guardians ad Litem and Court Appointed Special Advocates). ARD staff have also indicated that screen sharing functionality has proven an effective method of providing technical assistance and support to county staff. Examples include walking through the Trails CCWIS to locate information, and showing sections where information is required to be stored.

However, remote/virtual reviews also limit the ability to review crucial documentation in the hard copy file, which is needed to conduct a thorough review of the case record. This includes health and educational records of children, service provider reports, signed court orders, ICWA notification, and other documentation. To balance the benefits of the remote/review process with the need to verify specific documentation, the ARD implemented a hybrid review model in November 2022. In the hybrid review model, reviews alternate between in-county reviews and remote/virtual reviews, beginning with an in-county initial case review upon the child's first six months in out-of-home placement. It is anticipated that approximately 70% of administrative reviews will be held in-county and approximately 30% of administrative reviews will be held remotely/virtually.

Additionally, conducting reviews in-county provides county caseworkers accessibility to reviewers for inquiry and technical assistance, and helps to develop and maintain meaningful professional relationships.

While extra review days have decreased since the implementation of the hybrid review model, there are still some review days gained by not traveling to county departments for each review. As a result, the ARD continues to explore the potential ability to re-start conducting reviews on the Assessment and In-home Services populations. The ARD used to conduct these reviews on a routine basis. The resource impact of conducting the CFSR Round 3 PIP reviews required the ARD to cease these reviews. While the ARD may not be able to conduct these reviews with the same frequency as before, any cadence of review would begin to provide valuable information about these critical populations back into the overall CQI system for Colorado. The ARD has conducted ad hoc Assessment and In-Home Services Reviews in a small number of counties. In addition, the ARD is planning to conduct a Screen Out Review of child welfare referrals in October 2023.

Update on Service Descriptions

Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program

Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries (Section 422(b)(11) of the Act)

All children, youth, and their families who are identified in reports of child maltreatment, regardless of their familial status or countries of origin, are eligible for child welfare services. Colorado's CCWIS system requires the county department to identify whether a child/youth that was removed had previously been adopted. However, an additional field capturing inter-country adoptions is not mandatory and as a result, CDHS does not have accurate data on children/youth who were adopted through the intercountry adoption process. CDHS continues to address this gap in data collection and is working to change Trails to mandate this field when a previous adoption has been identified.

Colorado is in the fifth year of a contract that gives Lutheran Families Services-Rocky Mountain (LFS-RM) the authority to provide oversight of the inter-country adoption home study process. LFS-RM is responsible for ensuring that applicants wanting to adopt from other countries meet suitability and eligibility criteria, as required by Colorado statute and federal law. This oversight includes fingerprint background checks, child abuse and neglect background checks, Colorado and national sex offender registry checks, and home study requirements. In CY 2022, 89 families requested approval to move adoption applications to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for approval. Of these, 57 were initial approval requests and 32 were updates to prior requests. In addition, there were 25 children reported as arriving in Colorado for adoption in the CY 2022.

In CY 2022, two licensing child placement agencies, which provided inter-country adoption services, closed their agencies. Their agency records for all adoptions they had completed were forwarded to CDHS for storage and access as allowed.

In 2022, CDHS was able to implement a data system to track records for adoptions completed through the county departments of social services, as well as closed child placement agencies. This new system will ensure more timely research and access to adoption records for those allowed to receive them under state statute.

Services for Children Under the Age of Five (section 422(b)(18) of the Act)

Consistent with Colorado's efforts to expand prevention and early intervention services in the state's child and family services continuum, CDHS continues to support a number of programs that seek to prevent children under the age of five from entering the child welfare system, as well as reducing the length of time children under the age of five remain in foster care.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program

Colorado's MIECHV federal grant funds voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs in 20 of Colorado's highest-risk counties: Adams, Alamosa, Bent, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Denver, Dolores, El Paso, Huerfano, Las Animas, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Saguache, and Teller. These counties were selected based on a 2021 state

solicitation process and Colorado MIECHV’s 2020 needs assessment³², identifying “at-risk communities” by the following indicators:

- Premature births as a percent of total births
- Percentage of low birth weight
- Infant mortality rate
- Percentage of women with three risk factors (under age 25, not married, and without a high school education)
- Child death rate
- Percentage of children in poverty
- Overall child maltreatment rate
- Juvenile crime arrest rate
- Percentage of high school dropouts
- Adult crime rate
- Substance use disorder
- Percentage of unemployment
- Percentage of individuals below the federal poverty level

Colorado MIECHV provides a continuum of home visiting programs with the goal of ensuring that all vulnerable families can find a program that fits their needs and eligibility. Programs include Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPO), Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), and Parents as Teachers (PAT). Together, they serve families from the prenatal stage to kindergarten entry. The programs are administered by 16 local implementing agencies, and the following table provides information about the geographic distribution of the programs and their approximate caseloads.

Program	No. of Counties Served	Caseload
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPO)	10	377
Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)	2	387*
Parents as Teachers (PAT)	15	812
TOTAL	20	1,576

Table 8: Number of counties where MIECHV programs are available and have funded caseloads in FFY 2022-2023

*Includes caseload funding from the American Rescue Plan Act

Colorado Nurse Home Visitor Program

The Colorado Nurse Home Visitor Program (Nurse-Family Partnership or NFP) provides state funding for home visiting service to first-time, low-income parents in all 64 counties in Colorado. NFP is a relationship-based program that partners highly trained professional nurses with vulnerable first-time mothers and their babies. Eligibility requirements include voluntary participation, being a first-time mother, low-income at intake, and enrollment in the program no later than 30 days post-partum. Mothers who enroll in the program receive one-on-one home visits with a nurse home visitor throughout pregnancy and the first two years of the child's life. The NFP program is currently administered by 22 agencies across the state, including public health departments, community health centers, community nursing agencies and hospital systems. This program is managed by a four-part team that includes CDEC, the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus College of Nursing, the NFP National Service Office, and Invest in Kids. This team, known as the Colorado NFP Coordination team, meets quarterly to

³² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yjlnqmGm16r0TxWuqQh0Fu2pO1UZ920x/view>

review implementation data from all 22 sites, monitor program improvement plans, and discuss trends.

In SFY 2022, the Nurse Home Visitor Program served approximately 4,290 families, and in SFY 2023, the program is expected to serve a similar number of families. NFP always serves more than funded caseload because the clients do not stay the same throughout the year as they graduate or leave the program and new clients are enrolled. NFP's funding cycle is based on the state fiscal year; therefore, NFP data reflects the period beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2023.

HealthySteps

The Home Visiting for School Readiness line in the Colorado Budget currently supports the implementation of HealthySteps, an evidence-based program, housed in pediatric offices. It pairs a HealthySteps Specialist with families who request it during their well-child visits in the first three years of their child's life. The program is voluntary but all families in a practice have access to a professional with expertise in child development and early childhood mental health, in addition to the pediatrician. Families have access to a range of supports which include routine screenings, brief behavioral consultation over a few visits, or ongoing team-based well-child visits depending on the family's needs. This state funding supports the program in eight clinics, including three at Children's Hospital Colorado. The program has demonstrated an increase in a caregiver's activities to build early literacy skills. Mothers who have participated in HealthySteps are 22% more likely than those who have not participated in the intervention to show picture books to their infants every day. National research found that for every \$1 invested in HealthySteps, an estimated \$2.63 in savings is realized by state Medicaid agencies each year. The CDEC contracts with Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) as the state intermediary for HealthySteps. As the state intermediary, ABCD provides training and technical assistance to HealthySteps providers, data collection, continuous quality improvement, and monitor model fidelity. During FFY 2023 the CDEC provided additional funding to support the intermediary in their role and to expand HealthySteps to other areas of Colorado.

Incredible Years

The Incredible Years® (IY) is a suite of evidence-based programs that includes three prevention components for parents and teachers of young children:

- Teacher Classroom Management is a framework through which care providers learn positive classroom management strategies, how to build positive relationships with children demonstrating challenging behaviors, and how to help those children control their behaviors, among other essential strategies for classroom management, including parent engagement.
- Dinosaur School is a social-emotional curriculum that includes 60 lessons delivered two to three times per week in early childhood classrooms (preschool through first grade). Trained teachers co-lead the lessons using engaging activities, role-play, and video vignettes. The lessons focus on how to solve problems, control one's anger, self-monitor emotions, succeed in school, and form friendships.
- The Preschool BASIC Parenting Program (Parent Program) is delivered by IIK-trained co-facilitators over 14 weeks through weekly two-hour sessions. During these sessions, parents learn strategies and skills to promote children's social competence and reduce behavior problems such as effective praise and use of incentives, establishing predictable routines, effective limit-setting, strategies to manage misbehavior, and teaching children to problem-solve.

Each works to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors by leveraging positive parent-child and teacher-child relationships to promote preschool-aged children’s social-emotional skills, which prepare young children for success in school and in life. During the 2021-2022 academic year, CDEC partnered with Invest in Kids and community partners across 20 counties to support the delivery of IY for parents, teachers, and young children impacting 5,815 children, 437 teachers and educational staff, 73 Parent Program Facilitators, and 470 Parent Program participants. The annual evaluation report³³ demonstrated positive outcomes across the three components.

Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families

Family Support through Primary Prevention

CDEC has been awarded \$750,000 annually for the project period of September 30, 2021 - September 29, 2026 to implement the Colorado Family Support through Primary Prevention (FSPP) Demonstration Sites Project with the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families. The project will create the conditions necessary for families to thrive in five high-needs underserved counties in Colorado where a significant portion of the population is impacted by disparities in the social determinants of health. Stakeholders will shift focus from a reactive child protection system to an intentional coordinated primary prevention system co-designed with communities and families with lived child welfare expertise. The project goals are aligned with the intent of the funding and include:

1. Collaborate across sectors and engage families in applying a public health approach to child maltreatment prevention, family strengthening, and equitable well-being;
2. Enhance cross-system service coordination and strengthen family, community, and governmental partnerships;
3. Connect postpartum families to services and supports that are culturally responsive, universal, and evidence-based.

During the reporting period, three counties - Boulder, Jefferson, and Denver - planned for implementation of Family Connects³⁴, a universal home visiting support program. CBCAP funds were used to support additional one-time startup costs for implementation. Family Connects ensures that there is an entry point to essential support services for all families in a community – not just those at risk. Additionally, two counties, Adams and Prowers, began implementing a No Wrong Door approach through family resource center networks in their communities to reduce barriers to service access and ensure families get the support they need when they need it. The third demonstration project is a statewide community norms campaign, Colorado Connected, to increase family connectedness and decrease stigma around seeking help.

Community Norming Project through the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define community norms as group-level beliefs and expectations about how members of the group behave or should behave. A community norm that is dominant in Colorado families and communities is one of self-sufficiency which can increase social isolation. By strengthening social connectedness in communities, we can better support parents, create stable, supportive environments for children, and increase access to accurate child development information and community resources. To create conditions for children and families to thrive, the Partnership is working to increase positive norms within our communities on multiple levels: among individuals, families, and peers; workplaces, schools, and community organizations; and local and state governments and entities.

³³ <https://iik.org/programs/the-incredible-years/>

³⁴ <https://familyconnects.org/>

Preconditions for success with this priority includes a deep understanding of community norms, change strategies to shift the narrative for families and a commitment to bi-directional and complementary efforts. Specifically, clear priorities and shared messages will need to be developed that will cross population-level and grassroots implementation strategies, with local implementation focus on community organizing and population-level work and an effective external communications strategy based on framing science and informed by family voice. The special populations that are involved in the development and implementation of this initiative include Spanish-speaking families, LGBTQ+, fathers, and rural communities. These populations have been included in focus groups and Illuminate Colorado's family voice council discussions related to the community norms work. During FY 21-22, some accomplishments include:

- Consultation with Montana State University on best practices for community norms work.
- Distribution of "Social Support Norms among Colorado Families: Highlights from Listening Sessions in Five Colorado Communities"³⁵ by the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver
- Identification of Axiom of Purpose as the vendor to implement a community norms campaign.
- Distribution and data collection through a statewide survey identify norms needs.
- Launch of a Norms Community of Practice.

In the upcoming year, Axiom will be working with local communities to replicate the statewide survey locally to help each area develop their customized norms campaign.

SafeCare® Colorado (SCC)

SafeCare® is a nationally recognized, evidence-based, in-home parent education program that provides direct skills training to parents and caregivers in the areas of parenting, home safety and child health. This program is implemented in Colorado as a voluntary service for families in an effort to prevent entry or re-entry into the child welfare system. SafeCare® Colorado (SCC) is delivered by trained providers in a parent's home or another convenient location and has also been available virtually since March 2020. Families are referred to SCC through a partnership with child welfare and other organizations such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), other home visiting programs, schools, churches and faith-based organizations, community groups and organizations, public health agencies, family resource centers and medical providers. Parents and caregivers can also refer themselves directly to the SCC program.

Eligible families include:

- Families with children ages five and under.
- Families that reside in one of the 41 counties or two tribal nations currently offering the program in the state.
- Families who meet certain high-risk eligibility criteria.
- Families with non-court-involved child welfare cases.

The SSC program is funded and managed through the CDEC and is currently implemented by the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect (the Kempe Center). The program is supported by the National SafeCare® Training and Research Center (NSTRC) at Georgia State University. NSTRC, in collaboration with the Kempe Center and

³⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U3Di-1WxsrzcTXDp9Qc5-QM69_XDzaqw/view

CDEC, oversees the implementation and fidelity for this manualized, structured home visiting program. The FY 2022 appropriation for SCC programming is \$5,208,778. Sites are selected through competitive procurement solicitations, The current new five-year grant cycle started July 1, 2021. Currently, 14 sites provide SCC programming to residents of 40 Colorado counties, and two American Indian Tribes. SCC providers provided 9095 visits, to 687 participants, and completed 976 topics.

SafeCare Colorado Service Areas by County (FY 2022)

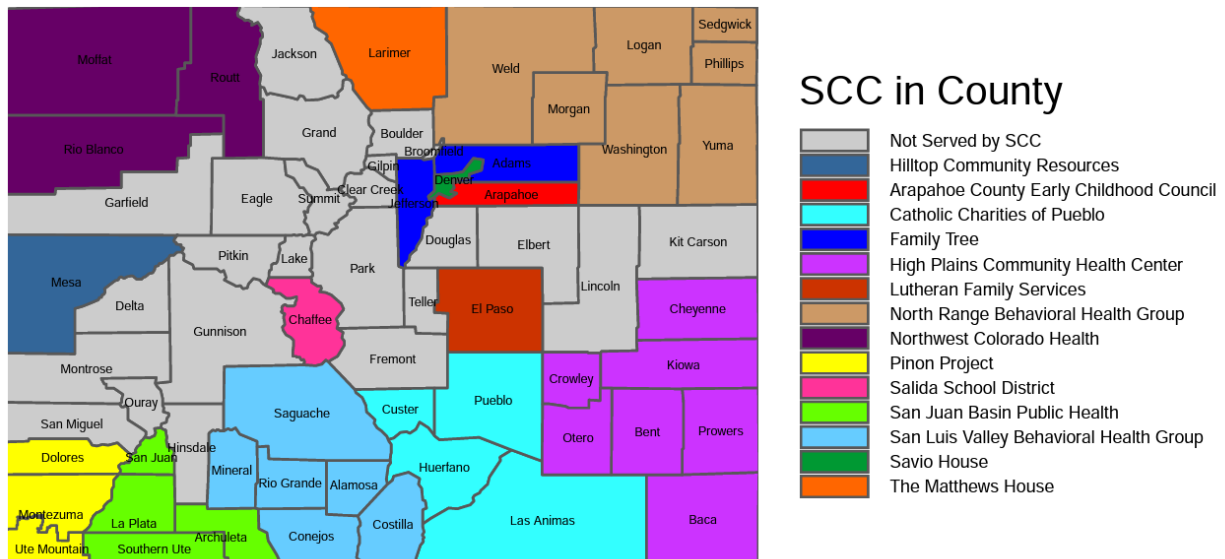


Figure 2: Map of SCC service areas by county

Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths

To prevent child maltreatment fatalities, Colorado recognizes that there must be significant efforts to prevent child maltreatment. There is currently no ability to detect meaningful differences between child maltreatment and child maltreatment fatalities prior to their occurrence. Child maltreatment must be understood within a full ecological framework and recommendations from the CDHS Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) must then occur across all socio-ecological levels.

The ARD is responsible for managing the CFRT. CFRT reviews incidents of fatal, near fatal, or egregious abuse or neglect determined to be a result of child maltreatment, when the child or family had previous involvement with the child welfare system within the last three years. The process includes a review of the incident, identification of contributing factors that may have led to the incident, the quality and sufficiency of service delivery from state and local agencies, and the families' prior involvement with the child welfare system. After considering the identified strengths, as well as systemic gaps and/or deficiencies, recommendations are put forth regarding policy and practice considerations that may help prevent future incidents of fatal, near fatal, or egregious abuse or neglect, and/or strengthen the systems that provide direct service delivery to children and families. Each incident reviewed by the CFRT results in a written report that is posted to the CDHS public notification website (with confidential information redacted)

The ARD also publishes a CFRT Annual Report each summer, please see Appendix C for the 2021 Child Maltreatment Fatality Report.

The CDHS CFRT operates under relevant criteria for excellence in child death reviews, as published by the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention in 2018. Recent understandings have emerged on a national level that reviews should focus on system level changes and the CDHS CFRT has also come to understand the importance of adopting a systems model approach to case reviews; an approach that helps create a space to have vulnerable conversations with counties of human or social services about their practices and lessons learned from these tragedies, while keeping children and families at the center of the review. While child welfare is responsible for intervening with families when there is an allegation of child abuse or neglect, and providing appropriate and necessary services to families in order to keep children safe, all systems and communities have a responsibility to help make families healthier and more resilient.

Reviews of fatal, near fatal, and egregious incidents of child maltreatment have shown that prior concerns which were reported to child welfare initially appeared as episodic events; however, timelines leading up to a fatal, near fatal, and egregious incident of child maltreatment share a different story; they often illustrate complex families systems and relationships, layers of stressors, trauma histories, extensive risk factors, patterns of abuse or neglect, and patterns of caregiver behaviors, etc. Child welfare needs to have adequate time and staffing to be able to sort through, assess, and provide effective services to children and families. Additionally, previous family and community violence is a prevalent risk factor identified in the histories of the families involved in fatal, near fatal, and egregious incidents of child maltreatment, and research indicates that violence is a predictor of future maltreatment. Families' histories often involve domestic violence, and it is evident that Colorado needs more resources for victims, and a system that holds perpetrators accountable for their actions. For more information, please see "Domestic Violence Task Force" in the Collaboration section of this APSR.

In 2020, a Steering Committee was formed, with a vision to ensure each CFRT recommendation is prioritized, acted upon, and implemented in a timely manner to address known systemic gaps and prevent future child deaths. The Committee is responsible for providing high level strategic direction for each CFRT recommendation and oversees and supports implementation of recommendations. The relevant group to review and act on CFRT recommendations will vary and will often involve participants from multiple offices, agencies, or sectors. The current committee has 11 members from OCYF, ARD, CDEC, BHA, Community Partnerships, two county departments, and a representative from the CDPHE Child Maltreatment Prevention Unit.

The CDHS CFRT works closely with the CDPHE's CFPS team to consider data from each system and make joint recommendations based upon these findings. Each review process serves a different purpose, and each process is supported by the respective agency. The CFPS staff members at the CDPHE serve as the two state appointees from the CDPHE to the CFRT, and the CFRT staff are involved with and participate in CFPS workgroups and state review meetings. SB 13-255 requires that the two child fatality review teams make joint recommendations. These recommendations are submitted in an annual legislative report to the Colorado General Assembly each July 1st. The most recent CFPS legislative report can be found in Appendix D (see Appendix C for the CFRT's Annual Report). Recommendations have ranged from promoting safe sleep practices, supporting policies and procedures that support quality and affordable childcare, to developing universal home visiting programs that would be accessible to all children and families. A guide about Colorado's Child Fatality Review and Prevention System was created³⁶ to explain the CDPHE and CFRT processes.

³⁶ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M1gVOJFkW7sUczCwGyat3XpfHCOPMOyG/view>

Statute requires that county departments provide notification to the CDHS of any suspicious incident of egregious abuse or neglect, near fatality, or fatality of a child due to abuse or neglect within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident. County departments have worked diligently to comply with this requirement.

MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) (title IV-B, subpart 2)

Colorado's PSSF program is managed through the CDEC. The programs focus remains on the overarching following objectives:

- Secure permanency and safety for children by providing support to families in a flexible, family centered manner through collaborative community efforts.
- Enhance family support networks and services to increase well-being.
- Prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families.
- Reunite children with their parents or provide other permanent living arrangements through adoption or kin, and
- Support preservation efforts for families in crisis who have children at risk for maltreatment or re-abuse.

PSSF targets to serve families through four service areas: family support, family preservation, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services.

PSSF programs in Colorado were awarded five-year contracts to provide services and they have completed one year of the contract. PSSF sites are required to renew their contract annually through providing new budgets and statements of work on a yearly basis for any identified amendments. After the first year, a few PSSF programs made changes to the initially proposed programming due to capacity issues with staff shortages or changes in the needs of the community.

Colorado PSSF sites include local government agencies, private non-profit or not-for-profit community-based organizations or tribal nations, with a focus on child safety, permanency, or child well-being.

There are 22 PSSF sites selected, and those sites serve 35 counties in Colorado. Sites include rural, frontier, and urban communities. The dispersed locations of PSSF sites allow for widespread access to PSSF services. The Family Strengthening Unit within the CDEC has family support programs that cover most of Colorado.

Funded PSSF service priorities remain the same and sites applied to provide services within one or more of the following:

1. Intensive family case management or home-based intervention: High Fidelity Wraparound, PSSF Case Management Guidelines, Child First (limited to specific activities)
2. Family Team Decision Making
3. Incredible Years Program
4. Parenting Education Models: Nurturing Parents/teen module, Parents as Teachers, Child First
5. Fatherhood programs: Nurturing Fathers, Caring Dads, Inside Out Dads
6. Respite Care

7. Colorado Community Response
8. Post-Adoption/Permanency Support: Adoption Navigator, PSSF Adoption/Post Permanency Support Services Guidelines, Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE), Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP), National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC)
9. Kinship Navigation
10. Parent Peer Support Programs/Mentoring programs: Parent Cafes, Circle of Parents

Service Priority	Model(s) Allowed	Service Population/Category: (service areas: FS-Family Support, FP-Family Preservation, R-Reunification, A-Adoption)
Intensive Family Case Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Fidelity Wraparound 2. Child First (limited to certain activities) 3. PSSF Case Management Guidelines 	FS, FP, R, A
Family Engagement Meetings	Must identify the model to be used. Family Team Conferencing; Family Group Decision Making; Permanency Teaming, etc.	FP, R, A
Incredible Years Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent Group 2. Dinosaur School 	FS, FP, R,A
Parenting Education Models	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurturing Parents/teen module 2. Parents as Teachers 3. Child First 	FS, FP, R, A
Fatherhood Programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurturing Fathers 2. Caring Dads 3. Inside Out Dads 	FS, FP, R, A
Respite Care	Emergency or planned.	FS, FP, R, A
Colorado Community Response (CCR)	Prescribed Colorado model	FS
Post Adoption/Post Permanency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adoption Navigator 2. PSSF Adoption/Post Permanency/Kinship Guidelines 3. MAPP 4. NTDC 	FP, R, A
Kinship Navigation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PSSF Adoption/Post Permanency/Kinship guidelines 	FS, FP, R, A

Parent Peer Support Programs/Mentoring Programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent Cafes 2. Circle of Parents 	FS, FP, R, A
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Table 9: PSSF service priorities

PSSF provider agencies implement assessment tools and surveys with fidelity to the service models selected. All programs should participate in continuous quality improvement activities identified by the program or an assigned designee. Assessment tools and surveys are used by the advocate to build trust, identify strengths, and assist the family during goal development. Program participant data collected is also used to evaluate activities in achieving program goals and service effectiveness.

Colorado PSSF programs use the CFSA 2.0, when required, prior to beginning the provision of services. The CFSA 2.0 is used to capture baseline information at specified intervals and during post-test to measure progress. PSSF providers work with families to complete the CFSA 2.0 to reflect on their family functioning, determine strengths and needs of the family, set goals, and measure overall progress. The CFSA 2.0 identifies strengths across 14 domains and allows families to select areas where they are most ready to make changes. The CFSA 2.0 is also used during goal setting with families.

Setting goals with the family can increase motivation, participation, and satisfaction regarding identified outcomes. The intention of PSSF goal setting is to recognize a family's expertise in identifying the goals that will lead towards stabilization and family well-being.

As part of the CFSA 2.0, PSSF providers complete the Protective Factors Survey (PFS). The PFS is a 20-item survey which has undergone national field-testing for reliability and validity for use with families engaged in child neglect prevention programs. The stated purpose of the PFS is to provide agencies with a snapshot of the families they serve, changes in protective factors, and opportunities to increase individual family protective factors.

Community Based Services

PSSF sites include agencies located in the community such as Family Resource Centers, a behavioral health center, and one program that is co-located in the high school. Other sites run out of local county departments of human/social services in partnership with a community provider or through prevention/family support teams within the county. All site applicants were eligible to apply to provide services in any or all four service target areas: Family Support, Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification, and Adoption Promotion and Support Services. PSSF programs in Colorado are providing a higher rate of family support services than any other service target area.

Service Decision-Making Process for Family Support Services

When selecting agencies to provide community-based services, an RFP was released statewide. In Colorado, agencies apply for PSSF funding based on the prescribed state priorities that were developed based on a statewide needs assessment and literature review of best/promising practices. Agencies applied according to identified local needs, best fit for the agency, and capacity for provision of services. Proposals were reviewed through teams that consisted of state program staff, county departments of human/Social Services staff, community professionals, and community members including parents. Proposals were evaluated for cost

effectiveness, satisfactory completion of the application, historical experience providing services and collaboration with community partners, staff qualifications and capacity to serve. In Colorado, PSSF sites provide prevention, intervention, and permanency services to families through self-referral or agencies helping families seeking resources and support.

Families connected to a PSSF site and currently engaged in PSSF services can access flex funds, when approved, for concrete supports to help the family achieve or mitigate barriers to reaching family identified goals. Sites are encouraged to partner with other agencies in their community to address families experiencing crisis situations and pool resources. PSSF sites are valued partners, and many have representation on collaborative management groups to wrap around families to provide a continuum of community-based services in their communities.

Ancillary resources from PSSF were targeted to fund consultants, training, and special projects to support PSSF programs and services benefiting families. Contracts included certified trainers in the Nurturing Fathers and Nurturing Parenting programs to provide training and in-depth work to successfully implement parenting education classes in several local sites and projects promoting fatherhood initiatives and services. PSSF provides support for The Colorado Fatherhood Network through the Family Resource Center Association that has become instrumental in elevating and maintaining the involvement of fathers in their children's lives in Colorado. The Fatherhood Network allows opportunities for providers and fathers to come together to share information and support activities to increase fatherhood engagement and services statewide. PSSF also provides resources to families through a community agency/Family Resource Center that serves American Indian/Alaskan Native families in the metro area through collaborative and culturally responsive services. Additional activities supported by PSSF included supporting the Biannual Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference, providing respite care focused on serving adoptive families and kinship arrangements, and providing support collaboration to assess agency readiness for the Child First programming in Colorado.

CDHS provides training to PSSF sites through multiple venues including virtual sites visits, webinars and informational sessions held at conferences or grantee meetings training topics include:

- Implementation science;
- Embedding learning into practice;
- Incredible Years parent group facilitators;
- Intensive Case Management training and monitoring;
- Nurturing Parents facilitator training;
- Nurturing Fathers facilitator training;
- Adoption support services training;
- Colorado Family Support Assessment Tool;
- Motivational interviewing;
- Children's safety;
- Family engagement; and
- Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

Services offered during COVID-19 through PSSF have required flexibility and creativity for service delivery. Sites have experienced and are still facing major challenges with the public health restrictions and requirements in their community. Many are unable to provide in-person services and have resulted in pivoting to virtual models of participation. Some services are more amenable to adjustments and have been successful while other services struggle with continued participation rates. Sites have struggled to hire and keep staff in their programs

during this time and have had the numbers of families served affected by all the obstacles associated with the pandemic. Unfortunately, with these challenges there are some locations that have seen increased needs for crisis intervention services mainly around housing or concrete needs and families have indicated that they don't have the capacity to participate in parenting education classes while they are teaching their children at home and/or working at the same time. Case management and connecting families to resources was a high priority for programs, and sites worked at being creative with families to engage since they could not in person many times.

Division X Supplemental Funding from the Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mary Lee Allen PSSF program has allocated additional funding to each state to provide some relief to families experiencing unexpected expenses and income disruption. The Colorado PSSF program awarded additional supplemental funds to each PSSF site to use for families experiencing a hardship or loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sites were provided a list of possible uses for the supplemental funds. The primary focus was supporting concrete needs of families already receiving services within the agency. Additional funds helped families who reached out with requests for housing, transportation, home supports, employment resources, social connections for families, and food.

PSSF supported numerous activities during the past year to strengthen services during the pandemic and was able to contract with an agency to provide community-based respite care for families located throughout the metro area in Colorado. The agency brings churches and communities together to provide host homes and volunteers to provide respite opportunities for children who need temporary care. The agency was able to expand its existing respite care services, coaches, and volunteers to increase the number of extended family-like relationships available using the additional support from PSSF.

Additional funding allowed for more program staff to receive training in the CFSA 2.0 tool, allowing advocates to complete comprehensive assessments with families to identify strengths and needs of the family. Funds increased access to reflective supervision and trauma training for staff, training in Motivational Interviewing, provided CQI training for PSSF sites, and aided in the startup meetings of Circle of Fathers in communities where the Colorado Fatherhood Programs exist.

Supplemental support enabled Colorado to provide resources to a statewide community agency, Raise the Future, to serve families through the Family Navigator program to help families develop lifetime connections. Raise The Future received additional funding to serve families in the Denver metro area and surrounding counties to access post permanency support. The agency provides "support to families early and often to prevent disruption in a family's commitment to adoption, kinship placement, and finalization."

The supplemental funding through Division X was a welcomed increase in resources for families although it did pose some challenges in appropriating funding in the quick timeframe. There are some limitations to using the supplemental resources to building infrastructure or capacity in programs that may not be able to sustain the level of implementation without continued resources.

In FFY 2022, Colorado PSSF programs served 1397 individuals in 1114 families. 2002 services were delivered in total, and the PSSF service areas breakdown is as follows:

PSSF Service Area	Numbers Served FFY 2022
Family Support	1175
Family Preservation	413
Time-Limited Reunification	167
Adoption Promotion and Support	244
Total	1999

Table 10: PSSF service area breakdown

(3 services offered were not designated into a specific PSSF service area, thus the difference in total services)

In addition to the total numbers served, PSSF funds a separate respite care agency that was not included in the count of families served above, but the total number of individuals served was 350, and the total number of families was 125. These families were not included in Table 9 nor Table 10, as the agency was not able to collect information regarding the number of individuals and families in each of the four service areas. All services offered were respite services.

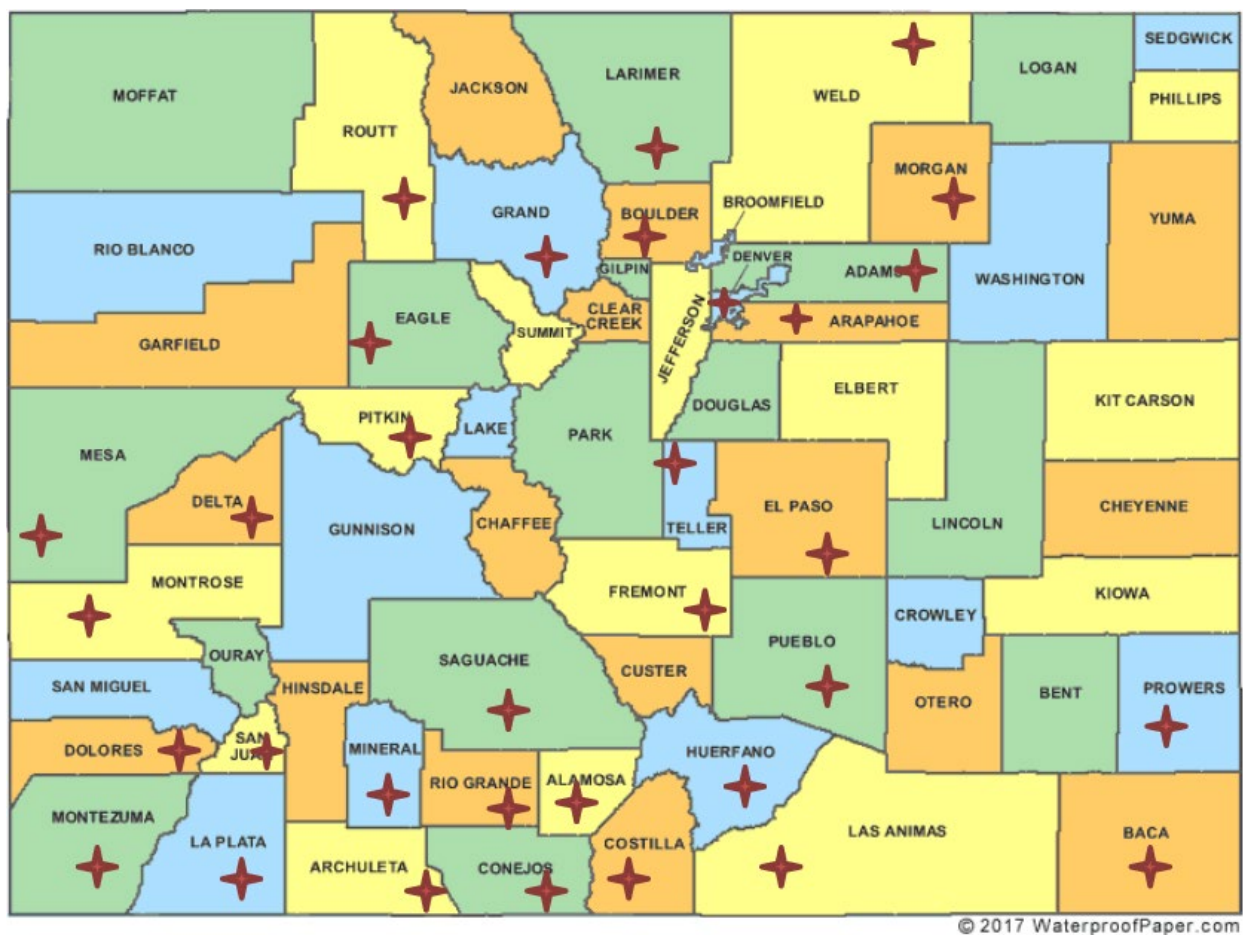
Services were broken into the following priorities below. Although the option of “County Design” is no longer available, families crossed over the reporting period that had started with that designation, thus included in the reporting. The number of “no specific service identified” is due to a glitch in the data system being used where this data was not identified, it has been fixed and now is recording the services being delivered.

County Design Service	163
Family Team Decision Making	115
Fatherhood Programs (Caring Dads, Inside Out Dads)	10
Incredible Years Parent Program	140
Intensive Case Management	489
Kinship Navigation	132
Mentoring Programs	38
Nurturing Fathers	79
Nurturing Parenting	83
Parent Peer Support Programs	276
PAT	37
Post Adoption Support	73
PSSF Adoption/Post Permanency Guidelines	22
Respite Care	167
No specific service identified	178

Table 11: PSSF Service Priority Breakdown

There is a discrepancy in the differences of funds spent in the four service areas of Family Support, Family Preservation, Family Reunification, and Adoption Support, with most being spent in Family Support and Preservation. It is believed that due to additional stress families have been experiencing with Covid and inflation, families are reaching out more frequently for support and earlier. Sites are interacting with families earlier prior to reaching a crisis level. The level of spending in each service area is based on community needs and departmental resources for other families who may be receiving services for reunification and adoption through other funding streams.

The PSSF programs attend semi-annual, quarterly, or bi-annual conferences/meetings where advocates can share learning of best practices, get program updates, and connect through networking opportunities. Sites provided year end reporting that included highlighting program successes and identified challenges, like staffing retention, that help guide conversations at the meetings.




 = PSSF Counties Served through 5-year contracts

Figure 3: PSSF counties served.

Additional PSSF services were offered through projects including but not limited to the following areas: Metro Counties through Raise the Future for post permanency supports, emergency respite care in the Metro area through Safe Families for Children, Northeast Counties family

supports through Baby Bear Hugs, family visitation services in Garfield County through the Family Visitor Program of Garfield County, Statewide prevention services through the Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference, PSSF funds were also made available to the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribes.

Population at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

According to 2016-2020 data from the Child Fatality Prevention System, the rate of maltreatment for children under the age of one is seven times greater than the rate for that of all ages³⁷. For further details on how Colorado provides services for children under the age of five, please see the Services for Children Under the Age of Five section of this APSR.

Kinship Navigator Funding

DCW conducts periodic reviews of non-certified kinship care placements. These reviews monitor compliance with rules for background checks, and evaluation of the kinship family and home. The evaluation must cover, at minimum, the following topics: a home inspection, safety, parenting practices, strengths, needs, support systems, potential for permanency, and other topics as deemed necessary by the county department. Two trends were observed during these reviews in 2021. There was a decrease in compliance with fingerprints for kinship caregivers when a placement was made in 2020. This is heavily dependent on the effects of COVID-19. The ability of kinship caregivers and adult household members to get fingerprinted in a timely manner was the primary barrier. The second trend was related to the kinship evaluation. During the reviews, it was observed that county departments using a template for the assessment scored higher than counties that did not. DCW staff, in partnership with county kinship staff, developed and implemented a statewide Kinship Care Evaluation template. It is anticipated that counties using this template will produce more thorough evaluations on their kinship families and will consistently receive higher scores on the kinship evaluation component of the review.

See Intervention 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 in the Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes section of this APSR for more information.

Monthly Caseworker Visits (MCV)

In FFY 2022, Colorado met the federal goal of 95% of monthly caseworker visits completed. The state completed 90% of those visits in the child/youth's residence.

Colorado's Use of the Monthly Caseworker Visit Grant

In FFY 2022, an announcement was sent to county departments to inform them of grant funding opportunities through MCV to increase the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and youth in OOH care and workforce retention. Turnover has been unusually high across the state and counties have struggled with retention as well as hiring. Due to the pandemic, the Sex Offender Management Board Annual Conference was held in-person as well as virtually in July of 2022. MCV funds paid for scholarships for 20 Child Welfare caseworkers and supervisors to attend virtually which ensured they had access to all breakout sessions for 90 days following the conference. MCV funds are blended and braided with other funding

³⁷ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_ty9U5p6Pz9L_HY50bvFhb6vVj2lXq3P/view

sources to ensure services are delivered to county partners as effectively as possible. The following table highlights several organizations that have received MCV Grant funds for FFY 2022:

County/Agency	Award	MCV Expenditures
Lincoln County	\$1,257.00	Wilson Amplifiers Business Office Signal Booster Kit, to boost Wi-Fi at the office to cell phone coverage is more consistent.
Broomfield County	\$2,473.08	The funds were used for reMarkable tablets and accessories, allowing caseworkers to convert handwritten notes from the field into word documents to paste into Trails.
Regents of the University of Colorado	\$63,216	Secondary trauma services; supervisor training on secondary trauma.
Illuminate Colorado	\$5000	Secondary trauma services, trauma informed yoga
Thomson Reuters	\$51,735	CLEAR software for the following county agencies: Bent, Archuleta, Chaffee, Teller, Montezuma, Yuma, Washington, Morgan, Park, Fremont, Kit Carson, Phillips, Rio Blanco, Prowers, Moffatt, and Saguache.
Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) conference	\$4000	County agencies served with scholarships
CSU/Summitstone	\$5,500	Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH)

Table 12: MCV awards and expenditures

CDHS used MCV funds to expand access to specific tools and services throughout the state. CDHS renewed an agreement with Thomson Reuters to provide access to a web-based investigation software called CLEAR to caseworkers in Colorado’s balance-of-state counties. The service is expected to increase family search and engagement capacity in small- and medium-sized counties. Previously, child welfare staff in small- and medium-sized counties had limited access to such technology.

In FFY 2022, there was continued high demand from county agencies to expand secondary trauma services across the state. A long-term provider retired in September, prompting an RFP process which resulted in a new provider, The Alvarado Group. Throughout COVID-19, CDHS increased availability of these services through MCV funding, which directly impacted staff retention and staff efficacy in providing services to children and youth in out of home care. All providers are now offering services virtually as well as in-person.

MCV funds continue to be utilized for the ARCH project. ARCH is a collaboration between CSU's Social Work Research Center, CDHS, Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Garfield, Jefferson, Larimer, and Pueblo counties to provide applied research and evaluation for child welfare prevention and intervention practices in Colorado. Now in its nineteenth year, ARCH is one of the longest standing child welfare research-practice partnerships in the nation. Here are a few examples of the work that ARCH has done in relation to father engagement, which has been extremely helpful in laying a solid foundation for the new father engagement C-Stat measure:

- [Father Engagement Toolkit](#): worked with DCW SME and CWTS to create and organize the webpage structure, including search functions for tools and research.
- Developed and delivered presentations on father engagement literature review (ex. [father perspective](#)).
- Developed research briefs on topics relevant to father engagement (ex. [identifying fathers](#)).
- Helped to develop promotional materials, including stickers and posters, aimed at developing father engagement and promoting use of the toolkit (ex. [All About Dads infographic](#)).
- Sponsored the Caring Dads Facilitator Training, which included 2 attendees from each ARCH county and state staff.

In addition to work on father engagement, during 2022 ARCH finalized the Placement Stability Predictor Study, which outlines the characteristics and drivers of placement instability. A Family Voice Literature Review was also completed, which outlines the literature around barriers and facilitators to integrating family voice into key Child Welfare processes. ARCH also started work on 2 new projects. The Court Process Study will be looking at the relationships between court processes and Child Welfare Outcomes. ARCH will also be contributing to the Child Welfare Workforce Analytics Institute, which is looking to develop and implement an action plan to improve agency workforce analytics practice.

CDHS continues to oversee applications and distribution of funding for FFY 2023. MCV data for FFY 2023 will be reported in a separate submission to the Children's Bureau by December 15th, 2023.

Additional Services Information

Child Protective Services

Differential Response

Please see Intervention 3.1.1 in the Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes section of this APSR.

Safety and Risk Assessments

In March of 2022, the supplemental documents for the Safety Assessment tool were disseminated state-wide and multiple information sessions were held for counties across Colorado. These supplemental documents were created as the result of the safety assessment workgroup that met throughout 2021 as part of Colorado’s CFSR Round 3 PIP. Fidelity reviews of safety assessments throughout this process identified improved documentation of safety, protective capacities, and parent and child functioning information within the formal Safety Assessment tool.

In 2022, there were multiple SLEs and an ECHO training series available to Colorado supervisors and caseworkers regarding assessing for safety and risk. These virtual training opportunities through the Supervisor Learning Exchange and ECHO series will continue into 2023. These provide a platform for supervisors and other county leadership to discuss best practices for supervising safety and risk throughout the life of an assessment or case.

Other learning opportunities regarding assessing for safety and risk were also developed in 2022, including a Web-Based Training about safety planning and partnered team discussion activities that are available to county departments in Colorado.

Institutional Assessment

Colorado promulgated institutional referral and assessment administrative rule revisions in July 2022. The revisions included a newly created definition for institutional lack of supervision and further clarified the population included in institutional abuse and neglect assessments as well as the jurisdiction required to complete the assessment. The revisions expanded notification requirements during an initial review of referrals of institutional abuse and neglect to include custodial counties and counties that certified placement providers if applicable.

Human Trafficking

The 2017 Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking: A Jurisdictional-Wide Approach grant came to an end in 2021 and with it the grant funded Human Trafficking Specialist position. In 2022 CDHS established a non-grant funded Human Trafficking (HT) and Sexual Abuse (SA) Specialist position which was filled in the fall of 2022.

DCW Staff (HT and SA Specialist) was formally appointed to work with the Colorado Human Trafficking Council's MDT Working Group as part of the Division of Criminal Justice-Colorado Department of Public Safety Improving Outcomes Grant, Connecting Colorado: Building Effective Anti-Trafficking Systems. This grant is housed under the Colorado Human Trafficking Council and is inclusive of working group members with diverse roles and expertise, with the

goal of developing a tool kit for use across the state to promote collaborative efforts in the form of a MDT to address Human Trafficking. The grant holders have also established and hired survivor consultants to collaborate and provide perspective on the toolkit as it is developed. The CDHS HT and SA specialist's role and goal in participation in this group is to provide the child welfare context to these discussions and toolkit and support collaborative efforts in addressing human trafficking in the state.

CDHS continues to monitor state and federal child welfare requirements related to human trafficking, including completion of the High-Risk Victim identification tool, and reporting to law enforcement Partners as is legislatively required. Additionally, ongoing monitoring related to the National Advisory Committee's Report on the Sex Trafficking of Youth and Children recommendations specific to Child Welfare and collaboration with stakeholders in those recommendations.

CDHS and the CWTS does currently offer a web-based training for Child Welfare staff on human trafficking. CDHS and the HT and SA specialist is working to continue building connections for increased and enhanced training for staff across the state in partnership with inhouse experts, as well as valued community partners with expertise in human trafficking across Colorado.

Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund is the only funding stream that supports efforts to prevent child sexual abuse before it occurs in addition to ensuring it is identified as quickly as possible. The Trust Fund contracts with Illuminate Colorado, the Colorado Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, to provide the Stewards of Children curriculum in addition to training addressing grooming behaviors and healthy sexual development in children.

Illuminate provides these trainings in the community, including presentations for early childhood providers, parents, family serving organizations, and professionals. They also certify and support a cohort of trainers across the state. The Tip Colorado public awareness campaign has expanded outreach and provided virtual access for people across the state of Colorado. The relationship with the Denver College of Nursing has continued, and Illuminate has been asked to train new students each semester, indefinitely. The COCAP Trust Fund also supports the Child Sex Abuse Prevention Coalition which exists to promote effective and comprehensive education, advocacy, and communication to prevent child sexual abuse and protect children.

In 2021-2022, Stewards of Children was offered 84 times training 793 adults. In addition, the CDHS trained expanded leadership and is encouraging staff in all the offices to be trained as well.

Mini-grants funding was provided to support 33 of the trainings where 681 community members were trained.

This year, a new Family Support Systems Manager was hired to oversee the Trust Fund, supervise the family support team, and staff the COCAP Trust Fund Board. New board member orientation materials were developed in time to onboard the new board members from board expansion. CDEC also succeeded in getting state general fund restored, after a COVID-19 pandemic budget cut, for the child sexual abuse prevention work starting July 1, 2022.

Plans of Safe Care and Substance Exposed Newborns

Please see the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) report, located in Appendix E.

Permanency

Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments

The ACF's Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments program awards eligible states or other Title IV-E agencies with incentive funds, which are used to improve performance in finding permanent homes for children and youth in foster care. Colorado's FFY 2018 and FFY 2019 funds were expended on Post-Permanency Services and Supports (PPSS). Colorado was awarded \$200,000 in FFY 2020, \$281,500 in FFY 2021, and \$1,214,500 in FFY 2022. These funds are used according to the plan outlined in the CFSP which includes post-permanency services and permanency recruitment activities. In addition to incentive funding money, Colorado earned \$661,533 in FFY 2019, \$777,989, in FFY 2020, \$937,965 in FF2021 and \$1,000,755 in FFY 2022 through adoption savings. For SFY 2022-23 the Colorado legislature authorized \$1,091,321 of spending authority for adoption savings. Of this amount, \$500,000 was authorized to supplement Post-Permanency Services and Supports to be expended by September 30, 2023. CDHS used the Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive and Adoption Savings funds for the following:

Post Permanency Services and Supports (PPSS)

CDHS created a new contract with Raise the Future from a request for proposal to provide PPSS using Adoption/Relative Guardianship Assistance Program (RGAP) incentives funding. The prior contract expired September 30, 2022, and Raise the Future was granted the new contract for up to 5 years beginning October 1, 2022. DCW continues to emphasize services and support in the rural areas of the state, where traditionally they had been underserved prior to PPSS and all areas of the program are available there. In-home coaching and connection groups are available to the metro area if counties choose to contract for the services with Raise the Future. Post-permanency services are intended to preserve stable permanency for families who were previously served in child welfare and achieved permanency through guardianship, reunification (parents or relatives), and adoption.

Below are examples of specific activities that were completed through FFY 2022:

- Trauma-informed/evidence-informed Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) training for families and professionals.
 - There were 41 virtual and 37 in-person TBRI® classes held with 436 unduplicated attendees served.
- In-home coaching to assist TBRI®-trained families in successfully implementing the parenting model is offered in rural counties once TBRI® training is completed by families.
 - A total of 564.86 hours of coaching were provided to 48 families (unduplicated count).
- Implementation and connection groups on a regional basis provided ongoing support, learning opportunities and natural points of connection for families. This is offered in rural counties following their TBRI® training.
 - There were 24 in-person groups offered in 5 of the 6 rural regions in Colorado. These had 126 instances of adult attendance and 171 children and youth.

- 3 virtual groups were offered that had 14 instances of adult attendance. These were offered due to COVID-19 limiting access to in-person groups in the initial portion of this reporting period.
- Due to identifying an increased need of support for caregivers of adolescents, we offered three virtual groups specifically for caregivers of teens and had 20 instances of adult attendance. These were not offered throughout the reporting period due to diminishing attendance and fatigue with virtual platforms.
- Access to a pool of TBRI®-trained families and/or individuals to provide respite care, as needed, for program-participating families.
 - An unduplicated count of 148.75 hours of respite provided to 7 families in rural regions of Colorado.
- Online directory of mental health professionals available to offer crisis intervention and ongoing therapeutic services for all families.
 - A total of 5240 hits on the searchable database were recorded.
- Specialized in-person and web-based training for families and professionals in all 64 counties.
 - Five specialized in-person and web-based training for families and professionals were provided in all 64 counties with a total of 329 instances of attendance.

Adoption Savings

Colorado does not foresee any challenges in accessing and spending the Adoption Savings funds. Colorado is not making changes in its Adoption Savings Methodology calculation at this time. CDHS will use incentive funds in FFY 2022 according to the plan outlined in the CFSP, but again with a special focus on increasing permanency and post-permanency support.

Expenditures may include:

- Provision of post-permanency supports and services statewide; and
- Training to county child welfare staff regarding how to provide post-permanency support for families in their jurisdictions, what existing resources are available statewide and within their jurisdictions and how to support the development of post-permanency programs in their local communities. DCW staff continues to provide information about PPSS to counties. Counties are encouraged to provide information about PPSS for families that are achieving permanency through adoption, guardianship, and other forms of legal permanency (legal custody and reunification)

Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA)

CDHS continues to have a membership with ICAMA. This membership allows CDHS to utilize agreements between and among its member states enabling coordination of provisions of medical benefits and services to children/youth receiving adoption assistance in interstate cases. ICAMA prevents and/or eliminates geographic barriers that may delay or deny the provision of medical assistance and post-adoption services to families who have adopted children/youth with special needs. This membership costs \$7,500 which is funded through state funds.

Voice for Adoption

CDHS continues to have a membership with the Voice for Adoptions organization. This organization is a bipartisan task force that provides accurate information on national adoption issues, common problems facing children/youth who are awaiting adoption, and advocacy for

policies that support adoption. Voice for Adoption costs \$1,500 annually and is paid through 2023. This item is funded through state funds.

Family First Prevention Services Act Transition Grants

The CDHS continues to use Family First Prevention Services Act Transition Fund grants to support the state's Family First implementation efforts. These grants remain critical to building and expanding the capacity of the state's services array and placement continuum. CDHS continues to work with a diverse member group that reviews the funding proposals guided by the priority funding categories adopted for Family First transition funds. As CDHS integrates more family voices into our implementation work across policies and programs, these efforts apply to the transition funds group membership as well.

With the approval of Colorado's Family First Prevention Plan, Colorado will continue to expand and stand up the approved evidence-based prevention services statewide. The following three priority funding categories for Family First transition funds remain the same including:

- Outcome 1: Children, youth and families have timely access to a continuum of community-based, prevention-focused services that meet their needs, promote safety and well-being, and keep families together.
 - Priority Funding Area 1: Expand the prevention services continuum in a way that addresses locally identified needs, meets Family First requirements, addresses inequities across the state, and emphasizes cultural responsiveness.
- Outcome 2: When necessary, children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting possible that is aligned with their individual needs, high-quality, time-limited and focused on treatment.
 - Priority Funding Area 2: Build a continuum of placement options that includes small, high-quality QRTPs as well as sufficient options for lower levels of family-based care that are responsive to the needs of children and youth.
- Outcome 3: Colorado has a strong foundation from which to launch Family First implementation efforts and support a successful and smooth roll-out.
 - Priority Funding Area 3: Address known and potential barriers to initial Family First implementation.

The third round of RFA closed on June 30, 2022. There were 17 applications, and eight applicants were funded for a total of \$490,511:

- Broomfield County
- Delta County
- Lutheran Family Services
- Maple Star Colorado
- Mesa County
- Safehouse Progressive Alliance
- Savio House
- Washington County

Evidence-based Prevention Program Intermediaries through 9/30/2025:

- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) - Invest in Kids - \$19,520
- Parents as Teachers (PAT) - Parent Possible - \$75,075
- Healthy Families America (HFA) - Illuminate Colorado - \$75,075

- Multisystemic Therapy (MST) - Kempe Center - \$75,075
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT) 0 FFT National Office - \$75,075
- Child First - Invest In Kids - \$75,075
- Fostering Healthy Futures Preteen (FHF-P) - Kempe Center - 75,075
- SafeCare Colorado - 75,075
- Parent - Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) Kempe Center (this is currently in the awards process at the time of writing this APSR).

The most recent RFA closes March 3, 2023, and this specific funding opportunity is focused on Priority Funding Areas 1. CDHS encourages applications that are innovative and bold, community and data-informed, demonstrate collaboration, and promote equity.

Family First Transition Act Funding Certainty Grants

Prior to H.R 133, the federal government calculated Colorado's funding certainty baseline at \$52,189,338 (ACYF-CB-PI-20-08³⁸). An estimated certainty baseline of \$54,836,444 was established for FFY 2021 (ACYF-CB-PY-21-04³⁹, Attachment G) to accommodate the enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage. While FFY 2020 utilized 90% of the baseline calculation for grant qualification, the FFY 2021 calculation is 75% of the baseline amount. Colorado does not qualify for Funding Certainty Grants as it earned over 75% of the certainty baselines during FFY 2021.

³⁸ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi2008.pdf>

³⁹ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi2104.pdf>

John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) (section 477 of the Act)

Chafee-Funded Services

Colorado's Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee program) provides an array of supports and services to youth as young as 14 who are likely to emancipate out of foster care, and to young adults between the ages of 18-23 who have left foster care. The Chafee program services are offered statewide through county departments of human/social services. In FFY 2022, 42 counties and tribes had access to the Chafee program supports and services through 17 host counties, and in FFY 2023, 42 counties and tribes had access to the Chafee program services. In addition, 6 additional counties will be covered by two organizations that applied for the Colorado Foster Youth to Successful Transition to Adulthood state grant program (State Grant Program).

In FFY 2022, 833 youth were served through the Chafee program which is slightly down from the 848 that were served in FFY 2021. The expanded eligibility through the waivers of Division X have expired, which reflects in the number of youth served decreasing, but the state will be implementing programming through House Bill 21-1094 in this federal fiscal year to ensure that services are available throughout the state for eligible youth. Like last year, there will be an increase in youth that are served throughout the state with the implementation of the recommendations from the Chafee Modernization Task Group, but there will also be a decrease as some of the Chafee County programs start rolling out the Pathways to Success program model, which has lower caseloads than the Chafee program. CDHS continues to redesign the state's Chafee program to provide more robust services and integrate counties with the Pathways to Success model.

At the end of every fiscal year Chafee Programs complete an annual Chafee report where they report youth served, successes of the program and room for growth. This is also an opportunity for agencies to request feedback from youth. Several youth from a Chafee program shared a need for better understanding around LGBTQ+ definitions and topics, specifically around sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. As a result, a group was created for youth to discuss these topics in an open and safe manner.

Some Chafee programs support and run their own Youth Advisory Boards. The young people that serve on this board have been able to participate in training professionals in the child welfare field. There are also youth who report to community members around gaps in services and resources in their community.

Following the implementation of the State Grant Program through the recommendations of the Advisory Board, DCW has reconvened a work group to update the funding methodology to ensure funding is provided to youth in an equitable manner and to find out how the Chafee funding methodology interacts with the State Grant Program funding methodology. Quality assurance meetings will continue annually.

Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act, Division X of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Division X)

Division X was enacted on December 27th, 2020, and expands services for Chafee eligible youth, places a moratorium on requiring youth to exit care due to age, permits youth to reenter care if they exited during the pandemic period, and waives the five required activity areas to claim IV-E. Division X runs on a Federal Fiscal Year. DCW immediately notified county departments of human/social services by issuing IM-CP-2021-0001⁴⁰ in January 2021.

Division X support was offered through September 30th, 2022, to help ensure that programs were able to utilize all funding towards meeting the needs of young people. Programs have reported that with these funds they have been able to stabilize housing for qualifying youth and pay for repairs on vehicles to secure transportation for education and employment. Division X dollars were also utilized to support re-entry for youth ages eighteen up to the age of twenty-one.

While there is not a legal structure in place in Colorado yet, House Bill 21-1094 will provide the structure required to fully implement the re-entry requirements of Division X. House Bill 21-1094 was signed into law in June 2021 and created two programs. FYiT codified reentry for eligible youth as defined by Section 19-7-304, C.R.S., and reimagines what extended foster care looks like in Colorado. As of February 2023, 355 youth have opted into FYiT, and 112 youth have reentered care. Of the total youth involved with FYiT, 258 were living in developmentally appropriate supervised independent living arrangements and only 6 were in a congregate care setting. This reflects the voluntary nature of the program and the attempt to provide more natural and developmentally appropriate services created by the FYiT program.

House Bill 21-1094 also established the Foster Youth Successful Transition To Adulthood Grant Program to further support youth in having a successful transition to adulthood and created an advisory board to support the program. House Bill 21-1094 runs on a State Fiscal Year (July 1 through June 30). This bill ensures that all eligible youth throughout Colorado are served. In June 2021, applications to participate on the House Bill 21-1094 Advisory Committee were posted. The advisory board was fully seated with two former foster youth who have had Chafee experience and one of those youth currently serve as co-chair. The board convened for the first time in December 2021 and for the duration of the first fiscal year met monthly. During these meetings the advisory committee was able to create the application, the rubric along with a scoring process and the funding methodology. This process prioritizes existing Chafee-run programs while encouraging communities that did not have Chafee programs to collaborate with their local Department of Human Services to create the programming. Thirteen Chafee counties were awarded funding based on the created funding methodology. Two existing programs also expanded Chafee services to serve an additional six counties.

During the second fiscal year, there were a few committee members who were unable to participate. Applications were open statewide, and DCW made outreach efforts to external non-profits and other partner agencies to create a waitlist for potential board members. The Advisory Board will review the application forms to make recommendations on improvements and re-evaluate the funding methodology.

⁴⁰ https://drive.google.com/file/d/11wwJdw98zIIIRnay-EJa_-UITDwBU2r8/view

In January 2023, IM-CW-2023-0004⁴¹ was released to request applications for those interested in Chafee funding and/or the Colorado Foster Youth Successful Transition to Adulthood Grant Program funding. Applications are due in May 2023 and will then be reviewed by the guidelines that the committee created before utilizing the funding methodology to award funds.

As part of the annual plan template, CDHS continues to ask county programs to identify what services and community partners they collaborate with, how they address the needs and/or barriers young people face, including but not limited to services to support LGBTQ+ youth/young people, how young people can access former foster care Medicaid and support to promote wellness/addressing young people's mental health needs. The report also indicates strengths and barriers programs faced with Division X allocations.

DCW continues to collaborate with agencies such as the Colorado Sexual Health Initiative (COSHI), to provide inclusive training and education to both staff and young people. "Setting the Foundation: LGBTQ+ Competency Training for Child Welfare Professionals" continues to be offered as part of the All Children-All Families program and it equips child welfare professionals with a comprehensive foundation of knowledge on LGBTQ+ individuals and their experiences in the child welfare system. Chafee programs have also evaluated any documentation that young people need to fill out to ensure language inclusivity.

Counties are highly aware of young people's need to access mental health services. While young people are still in care, counties ensure that young people are on Medicaid. When a young person reaches the age of fourteen, they complete a Roadmap to Success (RTS), which is updated when meaningful and significant changes occur in the young person's life. One part of this plan documents the young person's medical insurance, how to access Former Foster Care Medicaid, and identifying medical facilities they can access for them to utilize medical services, including mental health services. Counties also partner with local mental health agencies to come in and speak with young people about the services they provide to normalize reaching out if the service is needed. Counties are informed of changes that may impact their young people, such as notifying that the Foster Care Medicaid needs to be renewed yearly and providing resources to ensure this is done correctly.

Several counties reported barriers around the quick nature of Division X. There were also some barriers with the change of eligibility in the second fiscal year. It was reported that during the first fiscal year, agencies were able to collaborate with young people and work towards their stability, however, there were also several reports that cases had to close in the second fiscal year while the young person had not been able to achieve full stability. This created a cliff effect that county programs attempted to mitigate. Although programs are grateful to have Chafee and HB 21-1094 funding, having Division X funding was a bonus because programs reported they were able to help a higher number of youths with a wider range of services. Due to losing Division X funding, they are unable to offer the same opportunities to those that did not qualify for Division X at the time. Due to the time-limited aspect of Division X funding, infrastructure and additional staff could not be implemented by local programs to increase the number of youths served and provide sustained increase to the youth served through the funding. The passage of HB 21-1094 and the corresponding state grant program provides supplemental funding for youth who are 18-23 to help offset program cuts that have been seen in the last 10 years.

⁴¹ https://mcusercontent.com/cd781c9bc8f90270567729e9e/files/18070487-6d0a-1456-adcc-29a5671c7c2b/IM_CW_2023_0004.pdf?mc_cid=0dbaf50efa&mc_eid=8bce53c121

During FFY 2022, Colorado served a total of 833 young people in areas such as family support and healthy relationships, budget and financial management and career preparation. All counties reported that the funding was utilized to help youth find stability.

Implementation of Pathways to Success program

Colorado's Youth at Risk of Homelessness (YARH) grant, also known as the Pathways to Success program, has been implemented in approximately half of the Chafee programs in Colorado. The Pathways to Success program was selected to participate in the phase 3 summative evaluation in the Summer of 2020. The national evaluation team led by Mathematica and the local evaluator, Center for Policy Research, has been working to finalize the evaluation which includes obtaining institutional review board and Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation approvals. The evaluation started enrolling youth in September 2021 and will continue enrollment for two years. There will be an additional one year follow up period.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Data

CDHS continues to collaborate with other agencies and community partners to share data and better locate youth who are scheduled to complete the NYTD survey. CDHS coordinates with partners who have separate information systems to help locate youth. CDHS also coordinates internally across all programs to ensure that all eligible youth are located. Although a date has not been scheduled for the next NYTD review, CDHS is continuing to prepare, and staff are being proactive by reviewing its process and procedures for NYTD surveys to assess potential vulnerabilities in advance of the review.

CDHS continues to engage staff and stakeholders about the NYTD Review, and provide technical assistance to Chafee Workers, county caseworkers and DYS client managers in preparation for the follow-up cohorts.

Trails Modernization efforts are still in process. A new NYTD platform will be developed and streamlined for youth, caseworkers, and Chafee coordinators. This new functionality has not been released yet, so the results from the changes cannot be evaluated yet in this APSR. DCW is currently evaluating new applications to utilize for surveying youth and streamlining the incentive payment process for youth participants. DCW is also consulting with local youth advisory boards utilizing focus groups with local youth advisory boards to gather youth feedback on the current incentives and processes for survey completion. Recommendations from the youth advisory boards were to increase incentives to increase the response rate for youth participation.

In FFY 2023, NYTD data was reviewed and utilized by the legislative branch for the decision to create support for youth experiencing homelessness across the State of Colorado. The NYTD data was an accumulation of 10 years of survey collection. The NYTD data demonstrated a need for political action to address the needs for the youth of Colorado. The NYTD data resulted in Senate Bill 23-082⁴². If passed, the bill will create a housing voucher and case management program for foster youth.

⁴² <http://leg.colorado.gov/bills/SB23-082>

The Colorado Youth Leadership Network

The Colorado Youth Leadership Network (COYLN) is a conglomerate of youth advisory boards and councils (county and local partners) across the state. The function of the COYLN is to align, integrate and leverage collaborative youth voices for positive youth outcomes. DCW uses the COYLN as a source to invite youth to provide feedback/input via youth panels, subject matter reviews and focus groups. Opportunities for gathering this data have been slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In July of 2022, the COYLN hosted its third Youth Awareness Week. The event expanded to include other youth-serving organizations (i.e., Youth organizations such as Weld County Chafee Program and the BHA). The purpose of Youth Awareness Week is to emphasize positive youth voices, celebrate the influence youth have in the state and local communities, and recognize and inspire the various organizations and advocates and help guide Colorado's youth towards positive life choices and stability. This year's activities were primarily held in-person and the reading of the Governor's Proclamation took place at the CDHS Building.

Coordination of Services

CDHS continues to partner with the stakeholders reported in previous APSRs in coordinating Chafee services across the state. The below details key highlights of efforts that have been made in 2022 and planned activities in 2023 to be updated in further APSRs.

CDHS continues to collaborate with the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) and the Rural Collaborative on Homeless Youth (RCHY) on housing. ACHY is a legislatively created strategic planning and action body that advises the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Office of Homeless Youth Services and oversees implementation of the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan. The RCHY is a collaborative of state agencies, county departments and community providers that is focused on improving the delivery of services and supports to youth in rural communities who have little or no connection to stable housing and family situations. This work has continued through this reporting period with monthly meetings starting in July 2020 through the writing of this report.

CDHS participates as a governor-appointed member of the Colorado Human Trafficking Council to develop recommendations for improving Colorado's response to all forms of human trafficking. Please see "Human Trafficking" in the *Additional Services Information* section of this APSR for more details.

Improving educational outcomes for youth and young adults served by the Chafee program continues to be a priority for the program. In 2022, CDHS partnered more closely with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). This agency has recently contracted to provide Educational Training Vouchers (ETVs) and they oversee Senate Bill 22-008⁴³ which provides tuition assistance as well as higher academic supports to former foster youth.

For the past 23 years, CDHS hosted the Celebration of Educational Excellence (CEEX). This event was created to partner with other organizations and community partners to recognize young people involved in foster care or youth services who have graduated from high school, received a GED, or obtained a college degree. The event hosts a resource fair prior to the

⁴³ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb22-008>

ceremony where graduates can get information on schools, scholarship opportunities and agencies in their community that they may be interested in engaging with. CDHS and CDHE co-hosted the 24th CEEEX in the Front Range in June 2022, and the 7th CEEEX on the Western Slope in May 2022. The 2023 Front Range CEEEX is scheduled for June 2023, and will be focused on increasing community engagement. CDHE is exploring partnerships with community members to identify areas for engagement. Feedback is solicited from participants at the end of CEEEX events.

CDHS and CDE continue to hold regional meetings with county and school district partners to provide training and technical assistance as local agencies implement school stability protections of the Fostering Connections Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act and Colorado law. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the regional trainings and meetings were primarily held in person. CDHS and CDE continued to provide continuing education and technical assistance throughout 2020 through remote platforms and had similar, if not more, participation than previous years. Due to remote learning, many counties and districts indicated students were able to remain in their schools of origin eliminating the barriers imposed by transportation gaps.

CDHS' efforts to improve educational outcomes for youth and these efforts specific to postsecondary education, are documented in the following Education and Training Vouchers section. As discussed in previous APSRs, CDHS has continued to maintain a staff position at the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE).

CDHS and the Chafee program host counties have integrated policies and practices to support and affirm the sexual orientation and gender identities of youth served by the program. CDHS requires Chafee program counties to address how the program will support the cultural and linguistic needs of youth with varying racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities in the annual plans.

CDHS continues its work on best practices for working with LGBTQ+ youth through an internal work group that meets regularly. This work group continues to update and disseminate resources and best practices for the Division. DCW will be publishing a Colorado Best Practice Guide for serving LGBTQ+ youth in child welfare called *Seen, Safe, and Respected: Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+ Children and Youth in Colorado's Child Welfare System*. Through feedback from a nonbinary consultant, youth focus groups, and Colorado LGBTQ+ experts, DCW has worked to expand and strengthen the guide to include both introductory level information applicable to all youth service providers, as well as specific recommendation for navigation through the child welfare system. This guide is currently in the final stages of development, and more information will be provided in future APSRs.

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Voucher Program

In July 2019, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development announced the "Foster Youth to Independence" (FYI) Voucher Program. The FYI program provides eligible young adults with a housing voucher to assist in the prevention of homelessness among young adults with foster care histories. To receive a voucher, the child welfare agency must ensure the provision of supportive services for the duration of the voucher.

The Jefferson County Chafee program was one of the first locations in the nation to implement the new program and has become a resource for other programs that are wanting to implement the vouchers. The number of programs and counties providing FYI vouchers have steadily

increased. DCW will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to county programs that would like to integrate the FYI vouchers into their menu of services.

DCW staff have worked to collaborate with the Division of Housing (DOH) through the Department of Local Affairs and new staff at DOH and have met individually to talk about how the two teams can best support each other. This has enabled the DOH partners to provide technical assistance and guidance around pertinent housing resources for eligible youth.

Private and Public Sector Involvement in Helping Youth in Foster Care Achieve Independence

Counties submit plans each year with information on how the county program collaborates with public and private organizations in helping youth achieve independence. Many of the examples can be seen in prior sections. The annual plan also has the counties identify which agencies they collaborate with in certain areas to provide training and skills to the young people that they are working with. The areas include:

- Legal permanency and lifelong connections
- Wellbeing (physical, mental, and behavioral health, comprehensive sexual health, pregnant and parenting youth)
- Safe and stable housing
- Secondary educational attainment
- Post-secondary educational and training attainment
- Adequate employment
- Financial stability

Many of the programs will continue to coordinate with local banks to provide financial education around credit scores and instructions on how to open a banking account. Other programs work closely with local employers to create an apprenticeship program where the company can hire the young person at the end of the training period. Programs also work closely with their local department of health to provide comprehensive sexual health education.

DCW has an ongoing contract with the Credit Builders Alliance (CBA). They provide presentations and technical assistance to caseworkers and other casework staff to help with the requirements surrounding running credit reports for eligible youth. The Chafee coordinator has been brought into the conversations to expand the services that are being provided to the county departments. In July 2022, IM-CW-2022-0028⁴⁴ was released to inform counties of additional training opportunities to understand credit reports and navigate credit remediation.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program (section 477(i) of the Act)

Senate Bill 22-008 was signed into law by the Governor on May 26, 2022, that will cover the full cost of attendance for former foster youth of Colorado that are eligible. The Higher Education Support for Foster Youth⁴⁵ legislation mandates that youth who are eligible for ETV must apply

⁴⁴ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kMHy_Von5bqXmblgqjpPGKN8ktW-ER_Q/view

⁴⁵ <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/programs-and-services/postsecondary-education-programs-and-services/fostered>

to that funding source prior to accessing SB 22-008 funds to ensure that the state can continue to fully spend the ETV grant from the ACF. Since the administration of Senate Bill 22-008 is under the purview of CDHE, an interagency agreement was made between CDHS and CDHE for CDHE to administer both programs, ensuring that funding is braided in a way to fully fund the cost of attendance for all eligible youth along with ensuring the use of ETV funds. CDHE will be the new vendor starting in FFY 2023 and CDHS will be working to make the transition for students and ensure that professionals who support the applicants are aware of the change.

To facilitate outreach and support, Foster Care to Success also connects youth with county Chafee programs and community or school-based resources. County Chafee programs receive notification every October and February of all youth receiving ETV support who attend schools in their county to maintain connections and ensure every student in the program is getting the support and services they need.

Annual Reporting of ETV's awarded	Total ETV's Awarded	New ETV Recipients
2016-17 School Year (July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017)	138	66
2017-18 School Year (July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018)	103	40
2018-19 School Year (July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019)	103	34
2019-20 School Year (July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020)	114	45
2020-21 School Year (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021)	115	45
2021-22 School Year (July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022)	104	28

Estimate - 2021-22 School Year (July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023)	115	45
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Table 13: Number of ETVs awarded.

Chafee Training

Supportive services are voluntary for the youth and may be provided by other agencies on behalf of the child welfare agency. Voucher assistance is provided for 36 months. CDHS notes that funding under the Chafee program may not be available to support the services to be provided due to Chafee program eligibility and age of the youth; however, child welfare agencies have developed partnerships with housing providers, foundations, and other community resources to secure the services needed to ensure youth are successful in obtaining and maintaining the voucher for the 36 months.

The NYTD training through CWTS also includes training on the Chafee and ETV programs including the history of the program, eligibility standards, modernization changes, and what the Colorado program looks like. This training was created to provide a basic understanding of Chafee and ETV for caseworkers, casework supervisors, new Chafee workers, and other interested parties that have access to the training system.

Consultation with Tribes (section 477(b)(3)(G) of the Act)

Please see the Consultation and Coordination Between States and Tribes section of this APSR.

Consultation and Coordination Between States and Tribes

CDHS continues to consult, collaborate, and coordinate with both federally recognized Tribes within the state, as well as with Colorado-based organizations that serve the state's American Indian urban communities. There are two federally recognized Tribes with land bases in Colorado. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) is located primarily in La Plata County and includes 1,488 enrolled members as of June 2021. The U.S. Census Bureau announced the beginning of data collection for the 2022 economic census. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (UMUT) is located primarily in Montezuma County with another community in White Mesa, Utah and includes 2,060 enrolled members as of June 2021. The 2020 Census Bureau reports that 74,129 people who identify as solely American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) live in Colorado. The 2010 Census Bureau also shows there are 207,787 people in Colorado who identify as AI/AN in combination with one or more races. These population numbers have increased nearly 50% since the 2010 Census, and Census estimates anticipate an upward trend to continue. CDHS held an in-person formal consultation with the SUIT in October 2022. Attendance included executive leadership members of CDHS, BHA, and CDEC. CDHS offices presented on the programs they offer that are available to the Tribe. Discussion centered around Family First, the Teller Institute work and communicating important event and program information to the Tribes through their Social Services department as well as their local radio station.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

ICWA requires efforts to place AI/AN children within their own families, tribes, or other tribes whenever possible. In Colorado, there is currently a lack of available Indian foster homes, and efforts are continuing to be made to address this. House Bill 21-1151⁴⁶ was introduced in March 2021 to update statute allowing federally recognized tribes to voluntarily contract with county departments of human/social services to place children in county custody in tribally certified homes (if there is availability). With these legislative changes, the goal is to keep AI/AN children with their families, in their communities and connected to their culture. There has been discussion with both Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes about their interests in certifying their own foster homes but at the time of writing this APSR, neither Tribe has begun to move forward with this.

As part of Colorado's CFSR Round 3 PIP activities, DCW's ICWA specialist met with PIP counties to present county-specific data on ICWA and discussed process improvement strategies and solutions. Further details on the PIP activity can be found in the PIP progress reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

Efforts DCW is currently working on to improve compliance in dependency and neglect cases include implementing a more thorough auditing process of ICWA cases. For more details on how DCW is working to improve ICWA compliance in Dependency and Neglect cases, please see Intervention 3.3.2 in the Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes section of this APSR.

⁴⁶ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1151>

Senate Bill 23-211⁴⁷ was passed in 2023, adopting federal regulations concerning ICWA as state law, so that Colorado continues to ensure that Indian children are protected in cases of guardianship and adoption. Further information on this will be provided in future APSRs.

A draft of the APSR was sent to the two Tribes in Colorado for their feedback. The final APSR has been and will continually be shared with the SUIT and the UMUT after completion via email.

The Chafee Program

CDHS staff continued to work with the tribes to ensure they have access to support and services through the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. Chafee services are provided through the La Plata County Chafee program to both Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribal youth.

Both tribes are consulted on the programs to be carried out under the Chafee program through multiple ways. The first is through the option of applying for their own Chafee funding when the annual plan is disseminated by DCW. The tribes have yet to choose to host their own program and DCW has been told that they do not have the capacity to provide this service. Each year the La Plata County Chafee program coordinates with both tribes to ensure that their youth can be covered by the program. Tribal youth have access to the same services and funding that other counties that partner with host county programs have. Both tribes were invited to participate in the Chafee Modernization Task group that was discussed earlier in the document (see Intervention 4.1.3 in the Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes section of this APSR). The SUIT had a representative who participated in the planning and ensuring that tribal youth's service needs were considered in the proceedings.

To ensure that both tribes are aware of the benefits available to their youth, both tribes are included in an informational memorandum that contains the planning package for the annual Chafee plan and can apply for program funds. La Plata County staff maintain contact with both tribes regarding the Chafee program supports and services and ensure that all eligible youth that are seeking services can be served by the program. The annual plan that La Plata County submits each year documents their ongoing collaboration with both tribes. As a requirement of accepting Chafee funds, the state is responsible for outreaching and coordinating with the tribes in its state. The opportunity to apply annually for the Chafee program is sent out to all the county directors including directors of the Tribal department of human services. As of the writing of this APSR, the tribes have chosen not to apply for funding.

The Chafee and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) programs are always discussed within the tribal consultation and the additional funding and eligibility criteria that states were provided through Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act was discussed in October 2022. The SUIT indicated an interest in Chafee services during Tribal Consultation with CDHS. The SUIT showed a particular interest in looking into services for young people aging out of the foster care system. State and County Chafee teams will be working with the SUIT to support the needs of the Tribe. A member of the council was identified to have continuing conversations with the Tribal liaison through CDHS, DCW staff, and representatives of the La Plata County DHS to problem solve how to best support tribal youth aging out of foster care. An initial meeting was scheduled through CDHS staff to discuss goals in pushing forward with the collaboration and there was a follow-up meeting with La Plata County staff to discuss ongoing collaboration and engagement of the tribes.

⁴⁷ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb23-211>

Currently eligible tribal youth are served through a memorandum of understanding with the La Plata County Chafee program. CDHS will continue to regularly consult the tribes to see if they have the capacity to take on the program themselves but until then the existing relationship with La Plata County is enabling their youth to be served by the program.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

Please see Appendix E for the 2022 CAPTA Annual Report, Appendix F for the Substance Exposed Newborns Collaborative Responses Quarterly Report, Appendix G for the Institutional Assessment Review Team (IART) Annual Report, Appendix H for the Children's Justice Act FY 2023 Re-Application and Annual Report, and Appendix C for the 2021 Child Maltreatment Fatality Annual Report.

For information on how ARPA funds were used, please see the CAPTA Annual Report in Appendix E.

Updates to Targeted Plans

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

In SFY 2022, the timeframe for the duration of the diligent recruitment plan was expanded to two years (June 2022-June 2024). This provides the agencies with opportunities to test strategies and to make revisions based on their local needs. The state and its county and licensed CPA partners use targeted and general recruitment as a strategy to meet the needs of the children and youth in out-of-home care. Colorado has a county-administered and state-supervised structure and successful diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents occurs at the local level based on their needs. The plans addressed non-discrimination policies, pre-service and ongoing training to increase skill sets, knowledge and understanding of diversity; their non-discriminatory fee structures; data collection; and community/agency partnerships. Counties and CPAs identified work regarding recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents who are LGBTQ+ affirming; Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC); those serving children and youth with disabling conditions as well as children and youth with significant behavioral needs. The plans require current, expanded, or new strategies to provide a respectful and responsive experience to prospective, current, and former adoptive parents from initial inquiry through post placement and to provide ongoing capacity development and support of foster, kinship foster, and adoptive, to help meet families' needs and build on their skills.

- In SFY 2022 the state's Geographic Information System (GIS) application, which has licenses with a GIS software company, was piloted. The application provides opportunities for counties and CPAs to focus on recruitment in areas with higher removal rates and for placement of children/youth in closer proximity to their community of removal. A dynamic counter shows a live count of the number of providers, children/youth in foster care, and the total capacity in a user-specified location. It is anticipated that 23 counties and CPAs wanting access will have access to this application. Smaller counties and CPAs may not benefit from GIS as they will know where foster care homes need to be recruited and the locations of foster care homes in their area.
- The Recruitment and Retention Quarterly is offered to county and CPA recruiters for skill building, support with networking, and to share their work. It is co-facilitated by the DCW Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Specialist and Foster Care and Adoption Communications Specialist.
- The Foster Care Inquiry system continues to function well for county departments and CPAs.

There are no updates to the Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan this year.

Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan

The DCW's Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan remains in effect. The goals continue to be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure work is being accomplished and remains relevant. Most of the work on the plan is currently focused on psychotropic medications. First, the [Psychotropic Medication Guidelines for Children and Youth in Colorado's Child Welfare System](#)⁴⁸ is currently undergoing review and assessment. This document was originally created by a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders and subject matter experts in 2013 with a revision in 2017. The current revision has identified multiple small groups of stakeholders who are each contributing to ensuring the current revision will be able to speak to each group's needs. The final revision is projected to be completed in 2023. Second, the CWTS made modifications in

the Caseworker Fundamentals training to assure safe prescribing of psychotropic medications for children/youth in care. Lastly, work continues to develop procedures and protocols to ensure that children/youth in foster care are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes due to inappropriate diagnoses.

CDHS has created an automated system within the CCWIS system regarding completing developmental screening for all children under the age of five. This automatically refers all children under the age of five who are the victims of abuse or neglect to the local community centerboards for a developmental screening.

CDHS began utilizing the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) as a part of the full independent assessment to determine if a youth is eligible for placement in a QRTP. This will be completed by the state Administrative Service Organizations and oversight is provided by BHA. The CANS tool helps prevent inappropriate diagnoses by the nature of the tool itself. The CANS tool is agnostic to etiology or any cause and effect and does not generate a diagnosis. This assessment can be completed prior to placement at a QRTP to ensure the level of mental health treatment needed aligns with the QRTP level of treatment.

CDHS is also working with the HCPF to streamline the process for obtaining Medicaid information for children/youth in county custody. When children/youth are placed in the custody of county child welfare, their treatment, services, or diagnosis could vary by providers. In obtaining these records, multiple diagnoses and duplication of services could be reduced and mitigated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and national public health emergency, DCW worked to ensure children/youth continue to receive appropriate health care per CDPHE guidelines. OCYF's medical director continues to be available to county child welfare departments for consultation as all are settling into a 'new normal' related to COVID-19's ongoing albeit periodic impacts on health and operations.

No changes are needed to the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan this year.

Disaster Plan

In CY 2022, Colorado has not been affected by a natural disaster. Colorado has continued hosting a weekly statewide virtual conference call with all county human services departments and state leadership across CDHS. Additionally, DCW have continued hosting twice-monthly town halls on a variety of diverse topics, including issues relevant to COVID-19 when needed. Feedback from county departments, community partner agencies, and other stakeholders remain positive about the value of these shared learning opportunities. Recently, one town hall focused on recruitment and retention of county staff, which continues to be impacted by COVID-19 in some ways and exacerbated by the nation-wide employee shortages in fields like child welfare.

DCW has maintained the increase to required frequency of monitoring contact between DCW staff and all counties. In addition to increased virtual contact to counties, DCW has maintained the Directors' Digest monthly distribution to ensure county staff have all essential updates in one place and resumed in-person travel to meet with county partners. Counties have responded positively to in-person visits, and the division director has set a goal for all 64 counties to be visited by a DCW staff member within a year's time. These visits help DCW staff gain insight

into how communities across Colorado continue to recover from COVID-19, and what ongoing or new challenges they face.

The DCW has stopped collecting information from county departments regarding COVID-19 positive youth in county custody. DCW continues to provide free services that are available to county human service workers who may be experiencing stress or trauma during COVID-19.

DCW will address disparities for marginalized groups, including people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds by various family voice efforts and pilots with counties on gathering Trails race/ethnicity data, making sure it accurately represents self-identification.

Training Plan

There are no changes to the training plan. At the time of writing this APSR, CDHS is in a vendor selection process to award a new training contract beginning July 1st, 2023. A new Training Plan will be developed for FY 2023-2024, and the plan will include a description on the development and delivery of fundamental competencies:

- Caseworkers:
 - a. Engaging callers and families;
 - b. Referral and Assessment procedures;
 - c. Assessing the Safety and Risk for Children, Youth, and Families;
 - d. Family-focused case planning and Child/Youth-centered casework;
 - e. Least restrictive and culturally responsive interventions;
 - f. Implications of family-focused, Child/Youth-centered Child Welfare Services;
 - g. Impacts of separation, placement, and reunification on child development;
 - h. Impacts of secondary trauma and identifying self-care resources;
 - i. Establishing ethical standards and preventing fraud;
 - j. Legal aspects of Child Protection including statutory definitions; and,
 - k. Navigating Trails.
- Child Welfare Supervisors:
 - a. Effective communication with staff;
 - b. How to manage change and mediate conflict;
 - c. Evaluating staff performance;
 - d. Improving staff performance through developing, implementing, and revising individual performance plans;
 - e. Facilitating collaboration and teamwork;
 - f. Counsel regarding rules, policies, procedures, data, and laws;
 - g. Identifying staff training needs and developing effective training plans;
 - h. Monitoring workloads, professional ethics, and for potential fraud;
 - i. Develop and communicate recommendations for higher level management;
 - j. Recognizing signs of secondary trauma and supporting the use of self-care tools by staff;
 - k. Legal aspects of Child Protection including statutory definitions; and,
 - l. Navigating Trails.

Statistical and Supporting Information

Information on the Child Protective Services Workforce

Please see Appendix I for information on the Child Protective Services Workforce.

Senate Bill 21-277⁴⁸ required CDHS and counties to create a funding model to inform the state of how much money is needed overall for counties to provide child welfare services to youth and families across Colorado. SB 21-277 also funded a workload study that will inform a portion of the funding model. The workload study found that there is a need for an additional 284 child welfare staff across the State, however this may not reflect true county-by-county staffing needs. CDHS will be working with counties to gather individual and collective feedback on the study methodology, the data, and the results, to determine the true number of staff that are needed, so that the cost can be included in the funding model. Once the funding model is complete, CDHS will submit the information to the Joint Budget Committee for future decision-making about child welfare services funding.

Juvenile Justice Transfers

Between January 1 and December 31, 2021, there were 111 children/youth in Colorado who had custody transferred from the local county department of human/social services to the state juvenile justice system. This information is documented in Trails, which is used by county child welfare agencies, and the data includes all children/youth being served in an OOH placement by county departments and were subsequently committed to DYS during CY 2021. The data may include delinquent youth who were court-ordered to Title IV-E eligible community placements by a local county, without having a child protection concern. The following figure provides juvenile justice transfer data from CY 2015 to CY 2022.

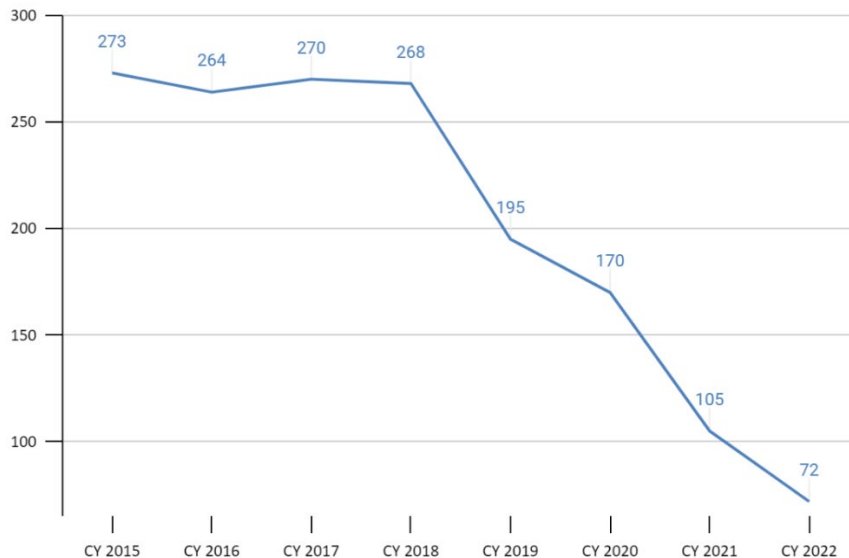


Figure 4: Number of children and youth transferred from CDHS to DYS

⁴⁸ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-277>

Overall, from a larger juvenile justice system perspective, recent data indicate a possible reversal of the population declines witnessed during the pandemic. SFY 2021-22 (and CY 2022) showed several increases in the juvenile justice population, including those in juvenile arrests (+19%), youth screened for secure detention (+13%), detention admissions (+10%), detention clients served (+13%), detention average daily population or ADP (+8%), and delinquency filings (+15%). While the juvenile detention population in Colorado and many precursors to detention showed increases, the DYS committed and paroled populations continued to follow a trend of decline. A summary of DYS trends by population type are as follows:

- Detention: Fiscal Year 2021-22 was the first full fiscal year of detention operating under the reduced statewide cap of 215. Overall, the state experienced an increase in detainees, after 15+ years of decline.
- Commitment: During FY 2021-22, the committed population experienced declines in most areas. Commitment ADP decreased by 17% to an ADP of 284.4. The number of clients served decreased by 25%, which marked both the 16th consecutive year of decline in unique youth served and ADP. The number of newly committed youth declined by nearly 11% to 167. Youth newly committed to DYS, over the last four years, are the lowest observed in nearly 50 years, with FY 1970-71 having the previous low of 304 new commitments. Commitment population reductions and brief parole population increases witnessed in years immediately prior (FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21) were a direct result of the pandemic and actions taken as a result. DYS leaders utilized the authority given through the Governor's Executive Order to release an unprecedented number of youths from secure placement to parole. These actions were taken to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19, allow for greater social distancing, and safeguard youth and staff.
- Parole: For two consecutive fiscal years, the parole population experienced declines in most areas. During Fiscal Year 2021-22 the number of clients served decreased by 31%, the average daily population declined by 33%, and the number of new parole intakes decreased by 13%.

Education and Training Vouchers

The number of youths who received ETV awards is located in the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) section of this APSR.

Inter-Country Adoptions

See "Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries" in the Updates to Service Description section of this APSR.

Monthly Caseworker Visit Data

Monthly caseworker visit data for FFY 2023 will be reported separately and submitted by the December 2023 due date.

Financial Information

Colorado's CFS-101, Parts I, II, and III are submitted with this report as separate files. CDHS included information regarding the number of individuals, families, population, and geographic areas to be served wherever possible; however, data for some services/activities are not readily available. Title IV-B, subpart 1 are allocated to Colorado counties through a block allocation that also includes Title IV-E and state funds; the number of individuals and families served through PSSF can be found in "MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) (title IV-B, subpart 2)" in the Updates on Service Descriptions section of this APSR. CAPTA funds are allocated to CDHS and are used for interventions and programs at the county level and are made available for all 64 Colorado counties. However, because CAPTA funds cannot be used for direct client services there is no way to determine the number of individuals or families served by the funds.

As noted in the Update on the Service Descriptions section, CDHS continues to work to improve data collection related to the Title IV-B, subpart 2 PSSF grant. There are multiple methods of collecting data, and data related to one-time services may include duplicate counts of individuals served in other PSSF service areas. It is anticipated that enhancements through the Trails Modernization project and implementation of the new CDEC information system will resolve these issues. As a result, more reliable data will be available to report on future CFS-101 forms.

The requested amount for FFY 2024 in Part I and Part II of the CFS-101 is \$4,611,130. As PSSF sites are determined through a competitive procurement process, it is not possible to anticipate the geographic areas where services will be available until after the procurement process is completed. This information is included on line seven, population served, of the CFS-101, Part III form which covers FFY 2021 grants. FFY 2021 state and local share expenditures for the purpose of Title IV-B, subpart 2, amount to approximately \$1,152,045.12.

Lastly, CDHS is not currently able to separate out foster care maintenance expenditure estimates between foster family and relative foster care and group/institutional care. The data sharing between Trails and the state's financial information systems complicates attempts to cleanly separate expenditures between the two categories. For this submission, the expenditure estimates for both categories are reported on line seven (a) of the CFS-101, Part II form. The 2024 APSR program instructions request information on the amount of FY 2005 Title IV-B, subpart 1 and non-federal matching funds that Colorado expended for foster care maintenance. In FFY 2005, \$2,890,135 Title IV-B, subpart 1 funds were expended for foster care maintenance and \$630,045 non-federal funds, applied as a state match, were expended for foster care maintenance. Title IV-B, subpart 1 funds were not used for expenses related to childcare and adoption assistance payments. Title IV-E funds are used for those purposes.

The CFS-101 Part II form references Population A and Population B in column (k) - Population to Be Served. For the purposes of this form, Population A includes all children and youth in foster care, while Population B includes all children and youth who are eligible for funds per rules in the Code of Colorado Regulations.